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II.—HUSH AND HURRY:

OR,

THOUGHTS FOR THE HOME

AND FOR THE CITY

By Rev. ARTHUR MURSELL

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THOUGHTS FOR THE HOME AND FOR THE CITY . . . .

BY

REV. ARTHUR MURSELL

LONDON:

ARTHUR H. STOCKWELL

3, AMEN CORNER, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

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1

WHERE I MIGHT FIND HIM

"O that I knew where I might find Him."—Job xxiii., 3.

WHEN life is most strenuous, language is most slow. We talk least when we feel most. Speech waits on sentiment, and abates in the ratio of its increase. The more intent the purpose, the more reserved the tongue. When the heart halts, the words flow. We are most fluent when we are most frivolous. When we mean most we say least. We pile up a Babel of adjectives on an empty heart; but a superstructure of silence indicates intensity. Eloquence is theoretical; action is practical. Job was eloquent, and was perhaps made more so by his afflictions. The obstruction of his life was the exuberance of his tongue. He would not have talked half so much had he been more happy. It is a morbid splendour that glamours his words. His language is copious because his hope is checked. He is sublime about what he would do. His purpose is poised upon an "if." It is the wild grope of a Homeric or Miltonic blindness before it found its inner sight. "If I could find Him"; then—what then? "I would order my cause before Him. I

would tell Him this and that. I would fill my mouth with arguments." His arguments had already proved one thing; and that was that he had not found Him. The very force of his cry proved the failure of his quest. As soon as he "found Him" his "arguments" would melt away, or have been washed off before the unpent sluices of discovery. He was in search of God. But the God he sought and the God he found were two different beings. The scene of interview was not the forensic area where the suitor pleads his case. Nor was the Presence that of a judge who waits the unfolding of a brief. The scene is a child's home, and the presence is a child's Father. And as soon as this discovery is made, all the "arguments" scatter like snowflakes melting in the sun; and instead of "ordering his cause" before His justice, he flings himself before His love.

And so it always is. Words may suffice when we do not know what we mean; but if we mean much, they are poor in proportion to our meaning. A heart in earnest or in pain finds language but a pale and thin resource. It may be better than nothing; but it is inexpressive of the deeper truth, and therefore starving to the heart which hungers for an outlet. A friend is away. I want to speak. I cannot. Let me write. I fill a sheet with words; but they mock my heart. I have written as well as I can, and as much as I dare; and I must leave it in the hope that instinct, sympathy, affinity, will read between the lines. Even then it cannot read half I mean, and will miss my true desire. There is a sharper and severer beggary than an empty purse. A man said to me in the rainy

street, "Guv'nor, I'm hard up." It was not eloquent, but it was graphic. And, though he had hit upon a passenger as nearly stoney broke as himself, his plea touched the bottom dollar in the shape of a last stray sixpence. But when I tried to write a message to the absentee, it was like shouting to a voiceless echo. "I am writing with a dictionary by my side," said a friend in correspondence. I might have written with an encyclopædia by my side, but it was worse than an empty purse. It would not yield a coin to pay the toll of my intent. What if you thirst after Bassanio's fortune but lack Bassanio's opportunity? You must trust your Portia with a glance, a gesture, or a scrap scrawled in a line, and flung into a departing train. Eloquence and elaboration quail before the might of purpose. "O that I could find Him!" I would make Him understand. Yes; in His case, certainly. In human case, perhaps. But it would not be by filling the mouth with arguments, but by filling the eyes with the vision, the ears with the music, the heart with the sympathy, the soul with the satisfaction. A dictionary is rather for restraint than for expression, when the freight upon the heart is large. If the volcano is active, a dictionary will not free the crater. It must find its freedom in the grip, the glance, the greeting. Love has its lava; and even human hearts are hot enough sometimes to break into irruption.

If this is a true hint of what an earnest heart is often feeling (would that we felt it deeplier and more!), with what an added intensity must the love of Christ be inflamed towards its end! We describe men as eloquent. Did it never occur to you that

Christ is seldom or never called eloquent? We hear Miriam's song, and Job's complaint, and Eliphaz' remonstrance, and David's psalms, and Isaiah's oracles, all described as eloquent. Paul, John, and Jude are eloquent in speech, epistle, and apocalypse. Barnabas and Gamaliel and Peter can be eloquent. But we hear and say little of the eloquence of Christ. This is because eloquence is too small a vehicle for His purpose. His manger was His mouthpiece, His shop His shout, His cross His cry. Nursery, Nazareth, and nail. These were His eloquence. Poet, orator, tribune; these may be names for the servant. But Infant, Workman, Martyr; these are the marks of the Master's more commanding power. And naturally so. For Apostles and seers were straining towards the Light. He who was the Light was stooping towards the darkness. "O that I knew how to find Him!" cries the human guide; and he scans his poesy and fulminates his rhetoric that the vision may appear. But when the Light comes, it has to climb like a twilight waxing against night. When we cry, "O that I knew where I might find Him," we do it by constraint. And our tallest powers are dwindled in the search. But He, too, is crying, "O that I knew where I might find him." And His quest is dark, prone, fallen man. And He has to prosecute His aim by restraint. He cannot break the effluence of Deity upon us at a blaze. It must be pent into the shrunk lantern of humanity. It must spark in the tiny gleam of infancy. It must glint through the crevices of hard experience. It must shine through shame and smile through suffering. Its daylight must struggle

to its noon through patience, knocking at the door of ignorance, waiting on the eclipse of prejudice, tearing the sackcloth of despair. Christ does know where He may find man. And, though the search leads Him through obloquy and death, He does not shun the pathway. It is not by aspiration but by stoop He finds His quarry. He has to make Himself of no reputation that our estimates may be checked as we reckon and discover Him. We are to find Him like ourselves—Child, Youth, Man; Infant, Schoolboy, Workman. And thus He shall grow beside us, not burst upon us, till we cry, not by the brightness, but the nail-print, "My Lord, and my God!"

It is the reverse in the human search and the Divine. When we find Christ we can trust Him. When He finds us He is never sure of us. He has to fill more than His mouth with arguments. The pleading is in His flesh, His life, His patience, and His Deity has to shine in teaching and in miracle. He cannot be eloquent lest we fail to follow Him. He must give children's addresses, and teach us by object lessons. And the kindergarten into which He leads us is a Gethsemane in which we are too drowsy to wait upon His agony, till His argument is pointed by the nail-marks and clinched by the cross.

Something of this was dawning on the afflicted Job, in spite of the sapience of his wordy friends. They stood, as we stand sometimes by sick-beds, bringing wafts of cool air and freedom where these blessings may not come, and smiling in the strenuous rudeness of our health, and prated of resignation. Their bright eyes and burly bloom were like goads to the

wrung nerves of the afflicted man, and their easy eloquence rubbed him all the wrong way. They dabbed the acid of rebuke upon the sores they could not have endured themselves. And Job was slowly finding out the true Physician by his contrast with the false. As soon as he saw Him he would have given up his "arguments." But, "he would know the words with which He would answer me." And these would not wait for the "arguments," but would anticipate the complaint. "Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power?" No. It is you, in the turgidness of your egoism, who do that. He would not air His greatness at the expense of my feebleness, making an opportunity out of my extremity. Nay; "but He would give heed unto me." O how I long to find Him. I go backward, but He is not there; forward, but not there; on the left and on the right, but there is no Christ. Only Eliphaz, and Bildad, and Zophar, mouthing at my woe. "But He knoweth the way that I take, and when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

When we know that we are found of Christ, then, nor till then, shall we have found Him. Our cries after God are all founded on false ideals of His character. "What shall I do to be saved?" is the scare of groundless fear. "What shall I do to save?" is the agony of love. The one is man's cry for himself; the other is Christ's cry for man. Man's cry only rebounds upon himself, as echo answers "What?" But Christ solves His own problem, and the cross is the solution of the scheme.

"O that I knew where I might find Him!" As

if He were hiding away: as if He were evading our pursuit. If we rather asked, O that I knew how I might find Him! we should be nearer the mark. Where? Here, there, anywhere. It is not a matter of place. But "how I might find Him." We need not wait to propitiate Him. You will find Him loving, waiting, patient. Ay, waiting. Waiting because you keep Him waiting. "Open unto Me, my love, my dove, my undefiled; My head is wet with dew and my locks with the drops of the night." Undefiled! That cannot be me. O yes, it is. He looks at me with Love's eyes. He sees me in the sweet perspective of His sacrifice. It is Eliphaz the eloquent who sees my sin. It is Bildad the bombastic who notes my stain. It is Zophar the zealot who marks my leprosy. But Christ the sinless looks at the harlot at His feet, and sees nothing but her penitence. The Martyr on the cross turns to the murderer at His side, and hears nothing but his prayer. If you ask, "How shall I find Him?" the answer is—Free to receive, slow to accuse, mighty to save.

Yes, that is His attitude when found. But what must be the method of my search? How shall I look for Him? How we love to multiply questions! How insatiably we coin problems out of simplicities. This is in order to satisfy our self-importance. It is less humiliating to tackle a problem than to kneel down and pray, as a lost child cries for its mother. Something learned suits us best. It is unphilosophical to be simple, to trust Christ, and call oneself a Christian. George Eliot would never avow herself a Christian, though she was probably veiling her true name in

discarding that designation as much as in assuming the *nom de plume* under which she wrote. She borrowed her religious idea from a fantastic-minded German, Feuerbach. And this teacher bade us accept perception, resolution, and love as individual attributes. But, by projecting these attributes out of ourselves, we thus create an image or ideal which has no other existence; and we enshrine it as a God. So, if you take the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the First Person in that Trinity is the projected Perception; the Second is the projected Love; and the Third is the projected Will. Does it draw God nearer to you to call Him your projected Mind instead of your Father. Does it make Christ realler to accept Him as projected Love, or the Holy Spirit as projected Will? There seems more of rejected than projected love in these poor conceits. The love is self-love. But if the search is the search of anxiety, the quest of helplessness and not of pride, the question will not be what, but where is He? It is impossible to be unbelieving with the real Christ near. "If Thou hadst been here my brother had not died"; my faith had not died; my fear would never have been born. When Christ sought faith in slow hearts, He did not say, "Project your understanding and be convinced"; but "Reach hither thy finger to My wounds, and be not faithless." You will never evolve a mere ethic from yourself. You must have a living truth outside of yourself, and that truth must absorb and take possession of you. You are not to be unclothed, but clothed upon. You cannot swallow immortality, but you must be swallowed up of life.

There is a stump of an old tree on Clapham Common which looks simply like a heap of dark green ivy. A history attaches to it. Some remember it as a high, tall elm, shaking its crest at every menace of the seasons. But a storm swept it down and laid it low. And, for the sake of its legend, men have encircled it with fences, and clothed it with luxuriant evergreen. Every year the trunk beneath seems to have shrunk, and the raiment of ivy thickened in bulk. And verderers say that as the fibre of the ivy bites the deeplier the entire trunk will be absorbed, and only the ganglions of the creeper will remain. I know not how that may be. But I know that man once stood stately, and fell prone before the blast of passion and temptation; that death and corruption came upon him; and that the ivy of the love of a living Christ enclustered his decay. And the closer the tendril of His hold embraces, the closer is the mortality swallowed up of life. The more our life is hid with Christ, the truer is it that it is not I, but Christ, who liveth in me.

Then, though our foul and limitless transgression
Grows with our growing, with our breath began,
Raise Thou the arms of endless intercession,
Jesus—Divinest, when Thou most art man.

II

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"What is truth?"—John xviii., 38.

It all depends upon the spirit of a question what it means. It is not what a man says, but how he says it that gives weight or purpose to his word. There is more force in the shrug of a shoulder or the curl of a lip than in a torrent of strong language on some men's mouths. If you go to a man with a great petition on your heart, and he only smiles and turns away, there is more heartbreak for you in that gesture than in any strength of speech. It is said to be the custom with doctors, in visiting a case of accident, to take the hand of the injured man, and, if there was no hope, to lay it gently down again. But if there was life, or chance, he would retain the hand, and think. What a tragedy of suspense to wife, or child, or bosom friend, would turn upon that simple act! And so it is with words. It is tones, not phrases, that have meaning. A tear upon an eyelash may say more than an oath upon a lip. A smothered sigh or a crushed sob hides more of storm than the breaking of a thundercloud reveals. The same word is better explained by the note in

which it is pitched, than by the dictionary which defines it derivation. What is truth? Do you want to know? Then you will ask the question as if you did want to know. And you will rather look than listen for the answer. If you do not see it in my eye, or feel it in my touch, you will not discover it in my definition. This question may be the quip of the casuist, the sneer of the sceptic, or the cry of the seeking soul. On Pilate's lip it was the first. He did not wait for a reply. He did not care. He very likely asked the same question of the scribes. If so, it was his last shot of satirical impatience at the men who had been teasing him about truth from behind a mask of lies. With a shrug of the shoulder he twitches his robe from the fingers that detain him, and plays the part of the level-headed, practical man. As if he had said—"Truth, truth! What's the use of talking about truth? What *is* truth? Go home and settle what the world has never settled yet; and then you can come back after you have forgotten this poor Jew and all the rage He has occasioned you, and give your definition." The question was propounded in much the same spirit as we draw up programmes for debating clubs. "I am a practical man and a busy man, and I have quite enough to do in knocking my head against the facts of life. But if you have so much leisure and so much curiosity, go and amuse yourself with the tangle of the skein, and when the clue is found, I shall be glad to see you again; it is too abstract for me." That is how your practical man treats every abstract question, and evades its principle. And what is the effect? What was the effect on the

practical Pilate? As far as the question meant anything on his lips, it meant that there was no need to give importance to the dreams and visions of this prisoner they had ensnared. He was harmless enough. He was no rival of Tiberius. Cæsar was safe enough from all intrigue from Him. There were no "practical politics" in His claims or aspirations. "I find no fault in Him."

Then what was his duty? What was the practical course for this practical man? Why, of course, to release Him as offenceless. But the coward was stronger than the casuist. "I will scourge Him and release Him, just as a sop to His tormentors and a rebuke for being troublesome." Well might he ask, "What is truth?" But what cared he for truth? Convenience, expediency, opportunism; that was as near the truth as he cared to go. If he had wanted Truth, it was not far from him. And the least he might have done was to go and tell the priests he would not do their dirty work, and kill the innocent. But a poor Jew more or less could make little difference, especially if His death could buy him popularity with these pestering Pharisees. So bring a bowl of water for my bloody hands, and let Him be crucified.

Now this is the invariable effect of asking what is truth, in Pilate's spirit. When our gorge rises against the trimming Roman, and we call him pusillanimous and shuffling and cowardly, and all the rest of it, we are passing judgment on ourselves in every instance where we shirk an act of justice or commit a paltry deed. The thing rises or falls, deepens or ascends, just as you interpret it, from the smallest trick in trade

to the crucifixion of the Truth in Jesus Christ. When you put a bogus sample in your window and sell a poorer thing inside, when you write fractions in small figures to be sprung upon your customers as an innocent surprise, when you put up your shutters early but keep your weary helpers toiling late behind them; when, either as servant or employer, you perpetrate any one of the thousand shuffles or evasions by which honesty is bilked; when, by word or act, by breath or policy, I raise a cloud of dust that smarts in the blinded eye of innocence; when I make a dupe or shirk a duty; when I lay a trap, or act a lie, or sneak a challenge, I put the question, "What is truth?" in Pilate's tone, and with Pilate's truculence; not because I honour, but despise it; not because I care, but because I am indifferent; not because I would make truth my master, but my slave. And the hand with which I waive away the very question that I ask is clasped around a hammer and a sheaf of nails for the crucifixion of the Truth Himself.

I may take no deeper thought of this than Pilate did. The burden of my guilt may press no more heavily on me than the cross pressed on the man who gave his fiat for its rearing. But my sin is Pilate's sin, and that sin is nothing less nor more than feigning an interest in truth which I do not feel; asking the question "What is truth?" with a casuist's levity and not a seeker's zest, and caring nothing for the answer, nor believing in the theme.

But this question may be a sceptic's sneer and not a casuist's conundrum. Pilate asked it as a riddle. It might have its solution. He neither knew nor

cared. He gave it to the Pharisees as a puzzle to take home and play with. And he did not grudge them the amusement. But others ask the question, "What is truth?" not with indifference, but with contempt. It was a bishop who tried to show that matter was non-existent; that life, movement, personality, earth, sky, home, love, everything, is but a dream, hallucination, phantasy. But many a man who sings with Byron—

> When Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter,
> And proved it; it was no matter what he said,

does the same thing by truth. "Anything is truth which has proved true to you," they say. The lawyer's lie by which he gains his case is truth to him. The robber's ruse, by which he slips detection, is the only truth he need believe in. There is no truth. Success is truth. Money is truth. And so, when they ask Pilate's question, it strikes against some hollow cavern jaw, and echo answers back with their own question. Truth, to the sceptic, is but one of Euclid's problems. He would work it out by algebra. And when he has written "q.e.f," or "q.e.d" under the theme, he has got as near the truth as the tether of his soulless creed will carry him. Perhaps there might have been some element of contempt also in Pilate's spirit when he had Jesus before him. The absolute unbeliever's theory of truth, if he has one at all, is that it consists in the most efficient working principle by which a man attains success. Thus, if I can succeed best by lying, lying is truth to me. Since there is no absolute truth, it is enough to have a relative standard. Hence each may have a standard which he may call truth, if

he be so minded. And he can get no nearer than give that name to what serves him best. Whether Pilate had any such theory as this signifies little. But he treats his Prisoner as if this principle entered into his idea. Jesus had set up certain pretensions, pretensions for which Pilate had too much contempt to take them seriously, save in so far as they affected his political obligation to Cæsar's rule. Jesus had made two great claims. He had claimed to be the Son of God. He had claimed to be the King of the Jews. The first claim He makes before the Chief Priests. The second before Pilate. The sacerdotal pretension is made before a sacerdotal tribunal. The political claim is made before a political court. If Christ had talked to Pilate about being the Son of God, Pilate, whose God was Jove, would have said, "Pay Cæsar's taxes, and be whose son you like." There would have been absolute indifference as to what is truth there. So, when the Chief Priests come with their indictment, they feel they must have some other charge than that. What they call blasphemy has no effect on Pilate; it must be treason to move him. Pilate is set to judge, not sins against God, but sins against Cæsar. So it is the claim to be a King that they allege as the head and front of His offending before the Roman. Perhaps there was something he could not define brooding over Pilate's mind, and conjugating itself into this question, "What is truth?" The spirit of that question was dominating his thought long before it took a verbal form. There was no intelligent anxiety, no wistful seeking after verity. But with the living Truth, the Word, so near to him, albeit unconsciously and un-

recognised, the weirdness of his wife's dream about "that just Man" was over him, and "What is truth?" was the vibrating movement of his mind. It moved like a whispering tide over the shingle of his fretted thought, and fell into a kind of tune e'er it found language for its music. A substratum of respect underlay the Governor's light contempt, as he calls his Prisoner into a room apart, away from the clamour of the malicious tongues, which, like the tongues of dogs, were all athirst to lap His blood. And when they are alone together this consideration and contempt are still contending in his mind. He looks at his Prisoner. Blood on His brow; the stains of scorn and rents of violence upon His garb; an unresisting patience in His mien. There is no insolence of ambition, no truculence of the demagogue, no craft of the pretender: only a hunted, worried, beaten Man. Pilate, who simply holds his brief for Cæsar, sees no dynamite for Cæsar's throne in such a rival. Cæsar need have no fear. "Are *you* a King?" he asks. We can hear the contemptuous emphasis on the "*you*." Pilate had been a guest at Cæsar's *fêtes*. His carriage wheels had crunched the powdered shale of the broadway before the palace porch. He had rolled among the roses and the tamarisks which avenued the way to the polished halls and *salons* of his master. He had paced that boulevard which, soon after his day, the bloody Nero lit with the flames from burning martyrs, and orchestraed with Christian cries of roasting saints. And with a courtier's knowledge of the splendour of the life of kings before him, he turns to the poverty and patience at his bar, and asks, with genuine irony

in his tone, "Art Thou a King?" There is the dogmatic certainty of the sceptic in his voice. All sceptics are cocksure. They are certain in their uncertainty. They are positive in their very negatives. There is no dogmatist more stubborn than your declaimer against dogma. "Art Thou a King?" Absurd! The contradiction is self-evident. And yet there's something—something—O "what is truth?" Had he but asked with less satire, petulance, impatience, perhaps the answer might have come to him. He asked it of his Prisoner: and Jesus saw he did not want an answer; otherwise Pilate might have found it, not in propositions and abstractions, but looking out of the patient eyes before him, and felt it beating in the great heart which he was asked to stop with nail and cross. Personally or politically, men and nations cannot come near Christ without coming within the atmosphere of Truth. Philosophers talk about finality: seekers ask for certainty. Here it is: In the Son of God, the King of men. Not what, but "Who is Truth?" should be the question. Truth is a living element. Christ is the Truth. Where is Truth? There it is: upon the cross that Pilate is permitting. If the world is getting true, it is because it is getting nearer Christ. If the Peace Congress means peace, it is because the olive branch is plucked from the Mount of Olives, where the Prince of Peace implanted it. If it is a dove that speaks, and not a vulture playing the ventriloquist to fool the world, it is the Bird that hovered over Jordan to attest the mission in which Deity was pleased. Everything that is real is Christ. It is not in Christ, or about Christ, or con-

cerning Christ; but it is Christ. It is His sympathy, His patience, His teaching, His sacrifice, His cross. And therefore, if this question, "What is truth?" becomes the cry of real concern; if it is the searchlight of the anxious heart, it shall find its living answer in the living Christ. It sees the Son of God; it sees the King of men, through all improbability. The beaten feebleness cannot conceal the one; the base betrayal cannot hide the other. The manger cannot mar the pedigree; the sawdust cannot soil the purple; the crucifixion cannot dim the crown. Bethlehem is no bar to rulership. Nazareth no narrowing of dominion. Calvary no cloud on coronation. The wise men's voices, which have caught the Truth, keep key and time with angels, and sing in the procession of a King. Critics and philosophers may have dazed themselves with jargon of an alien tongue, and caught the raucous bray of Jewish spite or Roman scorn. Dunces may have scanned their thin *libretto* from the alphabet of prejudice, and dotards may have pointed their score under the baton of a Babel burgess; but the disciple will have learned his *Gloria* in Galilee, and the child of faith have tuned his harp to the lyric of the heavenly host. Look not at the truth through Pilate's eyes, but let it look at you through Christ's. Then shall the doddering query, "What is truth?" become the full assurance which has found it; or which has been found of Him. It is His "Eureka," and not ours. All evidence is against Him. The lawyer will never find the Truth. It is the child. No bramble is so sharp of tooth or fierce of fang as the thorn of the wild rose. Haply it was of such tangle

that they wove the crown of thorns. But thornless roses were in store from the Eden of the rebought Paradise. The very mockeries to which men subjected Him were miniatures of the eternal truth. Perhaps the reed they put into His hand as a sham sceptre grew by the Kedron's banks, and the wind that murmured through its pithless tube sighed of the fate of old Jerusalem. But the true Royalty it feebly mocked was destined to rule in that Jerusalem the Golden, of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the unsetting Light. The lie the wagging heads flung up like spiteful spray against His cross was a white shining truth. "He saved others; Himself He could not save." Not one of the scoffs and the aspersions of His assassins needs to be retracted; only interpreted. He could not save Himself because His love would not let Him: because to lift Himself from the cross would have broken the lever which lifts you and me from death. Even Pilate's wet scroll needs no correction. No new edition can revise or delete "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." What I have written, I have written. Let no man alter it. It only waits for punctuation. And He Himself supplies it. He puts the full stop to the writing in the "It is finished." It is finished because He has begun. The King begins His reign because the reign of the old tyrants is done. He climbs His throne because Grave, Death, and Hell are tumbling from theirs. The work is finished because the Worker is exalted. He cannot save Himself. He cannot come down from the cross. He is dead. The title of the stained beam is at once an epic and a lie. They are all lies; all

Parthian spots from hell, where the father of lies has cast them in his molten forge. But they are all blazing and eternal truths. Truths everlasting, yet pouting like blisters upon lying lips.

O "what is truth?" I ask it not with Pilate's cavilling unfaith. I ask it not with the scribe's pedantic sneer. It is the cry and challenge of my seeking soul. "What is truth?" I want to know, to see, to feel. "God is love." "God so loved the world that He sent His only Son." "It is a faithful saying that Christ died for sinners." Is that the truth? No. That is true; but it is not the truth. Stand up and tell men that. Kneel down and tell the wretched that; and you tell them what is true. But they ask, "What is Truth?" They want to know, to see, to feel. Then show them Christ. Not what is Truth, but Who is Truth must be the quest. Show men the living, dying, rising Christ. Living, and living alone. Treading the winepress, and of the people not one with Him. Rising; but not alone; but with all the freight of ransomed life in the fire-track of His wake. You want to know? Know Him, and the power of His resurrection. That is the Truth. You want to feel. Feel Him Who liveth and was dead, and behold He is alive for evermore. You want to see. See Him; for He only is the Truth. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

III

PONTIUS PILATE UP TO DATE

"What is truth?"—John xviii., 38.

We lament, and with too much reason, the cold attitude of men towards religion. But it is not all indifference. Reading and intelligence may have made men less amenable to mere dogmatism. And this may go a long way to explain the emptying of churches, and the discounting of oracular authority. Time was when men came to church for spiritual help, bringing their quests, their problems, and their cares. But it is not so used now. It seems to have less to say to the great cry of the time. Hence it is turned into a sort of religious playroom, where we frivol with "movements" instead of wrestle with loads. It is a kind of *creche* where "missions" are performed by experts at the game, who revel in the stir they make. But the load-carriers, who cannot be beguiled by *tableaux*, charmed by tunes, or comforted by tales, are as abundant now as ever. Life is as puzzling now, and more so, than it ever was. Yet the solution of the riddle is not looked for in the Church. This is not because they are indifferent. It is because we are

shallow, tricky, egotistical. We are more bent on stir than on solidity. The querists concerning life's problems can get more help from a sporting paper than from gowns and cassocks. Is this statement resented? Well, there is a dramatic journal whose policy ignores all timeworn feeling about the Sabbath, and seeks admission to our Sunday breakfast tables; and there is a prescient writer who touches the philosophy of things, writing over the signature of "Merlin," who takes up, from a sympathetic thinker's point of view, many of the problems which perplex religious life. He says that since he has touched these questions his correspondence has incalculably multiplied. Letters, enquiries, solicitations, pour in from people of the world, from brokers, clubmen, sportsmen, dramatists, seeking light and explanation. The pent lava seethes from the crater of anxiety, and wistfulness turns towards intelligence and sympathy. And when we grow sympathetic and intelligent, instead of egotistical and arrogant, men will turn to us amidst their problems and their cares; and when we discard the expedients of cant for the methods of a patient comradeship, men will again take knowledge of us, if not that we have been with Jesus, at least that we have been near warmth and light; and it will be our fault then if we fail to show that this is one and the same thing.

It is a significant fact for preachers and churches to confront, that an interest exists, and even an anxiety prevails upon religious things, but that it is not to them, but to the suggestions of speculative minds outside, that enquiry and expectation turn for light

and help. Why is this? The reasons are several, but they are not far to seek. They are to be found in the natural constitution of man, in the progress of reading and of thought, and in the attitude of the Church itself. There is such an element as natural religion. Men cannot live amidst the social conditions of the world without demanding a policy for the regulation of the realm of conscience; and Pilate's legacy of wistfulness as to what is truth is an inheritance unspent even in 20th century indifference. The conundrum of morality and religion waits solution, and men continue to try to solve it for themselves. There is an innate reluctance to seek the solvent in the supernatural. It must be looked for in law, phenomena, and precedent. And hence it is to scholars, scientists, philosophers that enquiry turns, and the key to life's great riddle and responsibility's demand is looked for under the desks of class-rooms, in the cloisters of the schools, and in the leaves of books. That it will never be found there we are assured. No candlelight of mere research will ever find it. Only the Sun rising in the East of Christian faith will reveal it. But a day like this of multiplying libraries and accumulating readers tends to strengthen the delusion; and men still keep on knocking at the doors of laboratories and colleges, demanding, "What is truth?" And the bewilderment continues. As Babel's tower rises higher the confusion grows. We are intent upon the wonderful works of men; but it is only when we extol the wonderful works of God that every man shall speak in his own language, yet his brother in all lands shall understand. It is therefore to the Church that men

might be expected to repair for help and light. There was a time in which they did so. But now that mind and literature are free, they have not forgotten that a sacerdotal monopoly begrudged an independent search, and a priestly dogma often hid the truth. The memory of a chained-up Bible rises as a shrouded survival of a narrow age. And the vision of a priesthood munching the showbread has eclipsed the sweeter vision of the Saviour breaking the loaves only to spread them widlier through the crowd. Hence tradition tars the Church with a black brush, leaving the smears of bigotry upon her shield; and the reaction of eclectic truancy sets in. The Church is feeling the effect of this revolt. But she is taking the wrong means to stem it. Behind some of her windows we can hear the cry, "Who hath believed our reports?" And within others we hear hysteric hallelujahs, like a timid boy whistling to keep his courage up. We are content with the puerilities of programmes instead of an apocalypse of light. Anything to fetch a crowd. But the Church must fill the people before the people will fill the Church, and if it only fills them with the hysteria of "rallies" and conventions, it is little consequence that the flatulence of such food should be refused. The Church is lapsing into the world's methods. Everything is for sale. Men make merchandise of truth, and fling the temple on the market, and bring the market into the temple. Affection is at a discount, and filial piety is so tepid that it puts a reserve price upon its mother. Time was when patriotism was writ large in the spelling-books of men; when Leonidas, Tell,

Garibaldi could stir the blood of schoolboys and stir the chivalry of their greyer sires. But now a bag of dollars lugged across the sea suffices to divert our commerce, to unman our ships, and buy up the motherland. Barter and bargain take the place of loyalty, and, twopence more, and down comes the British flag. It is the same with what calls itself religion. A bribe can make our own merchants swop the Union Jack and fly the Stars and Stripes. And whim or fancy will send one to Church and one to Chapel, and another to the Sunday concert. People don't care. They have no conscience about what they do or where they go. They pretend to be fastidious, and fly from a false note. So the Church caters for custom by taking up orchestras and providing bands. We worked the "brief, bright, brotherly" jargon till we played it out and sickened a million thoughtful souls that we might attract a thousand vacant gazers. Fresh novelties are put in stock, and old patterns are relabelled with new names, and the butterflies flutter round each gaudy colour, like children pleased with a new toy.

Should Christ return in the garb He wore in Galilee it is hard to say at which of the vices of the temple He would open His crusade. He would enter it for the same purpose as He entered it of old; to fill it with His own unselfish glory. And He would find the same barrier in the creaking tables of the money-changers thwarting His aim at every turn. He would enter our cathedrals amidst the pomps of coronations and bid the priests unfrock themselves, while He wrote upon the walls, "My Kingdom is not of this world." But He would come with the same purpose

into our simpler fanes, and He would find the same barriers there. He would find them at our missions and revivals, where we wear the drapery of self-centred egotism within while we are chattering to the simplest child. The leaders of a local mission greeted each other with complacent smiles, boasting of how they "had fought the devil and given him a bad time of it." Surely the devil seldom had a better time of it than when he heard that saintly swagger. Some of us can speak from a long and intimate acquaintance with the devil, but a poor minister must not set up his Canute-chair against the flood-tide of lay arrogance. But Satan never had those gifted laymen more abjectly at his mercy, or his forked hoof more firmly on their necks than while they were boasting of having knocked him down. Poor devil! as if a resolution carried *nem. con.* at Exeter Hall can shake his kingdom! I will back Satan any day against a braggart saint. Man! if you would fight the devil, fight him alone, as your Master fought and won. These grips are for Gethsemane; these sweat-drops are the secrets of the soul, not to be chaffered on in vestries, or dramatised in shows. And this is the one great reason why a longing world repudiates the methods of a shallow Church. We are striving and girding at each other over an Education Bill. And men say we of the Free Churches are bigoted, and put sect in front of education. The Education Bill is an honest effort made by honest men to find a reasonable solution of a crucial problem of society. To try to make party capital out of it is disingenuous. No merely political party can ever solve the religious

difficulty. One side will try to profit by the other side's mistakes, and will parrot the cry of religious education on the one side and religious equality on the other. But a politician does not and cannot understand what is truly meant by either religious education or religious equality. It takes a religious man to do that. And religion is no monopoly of either party. And so it comes about that a Cabinet that lives, as it were, in the political purple becomes earwigged by a sacerdotal clique whose religious idea is represented by catechisms and clergy and sidesmen, and they say there can be no religious education without these. And so the Cabinet fill up their bill with these on the principle of "anything for a quiet life." They do not want to hurt the Free Churchman, but they do not know or care anything for what he wants. Lord Palmerston was not a religious man, but Lord Shaftesbury was; and when the Minister had to appoint a new bishop, he got Lord Shaftesbury to prompt him, and be a sort of consecrated jackal, by suggesting the man who was likely to wear a silk apron the most harmlessly. Our Government have done much the same. They do not know, and do not particularly care. Had the other side held ascendancy the only difference would have been that the socialist instead of the priest would have been the *fidus Achates*, and the leaning would have been towards an education without religion, which would have been by far the truer plan, since it would stimulate the Church and the family to their duty to their children and to God. But parties do not understand or want to understand religion. And no

political party, however loudly it may clamour through the voices of its leaders about religious equality, has any true idea of the root principle of Nonconformity. Neither have two-thirds of those who affect its forms. Its principles are purely spiritual, and therefore not only important but vital and essential. They are based solely on our reading of the teaching, and our instinct of the spirit of Jesus Christ. If worship were a thing of music, ritual, organs, and drapery, which man amongst us, in his senses, would bend in barns, and sing in discords, while there are cathedrals, abbeys, and minsters amidst which to meditate, bishops to bless us, or stalls in which to snore? We are Nonconformists because we believe a political Church, however sumptuous, to burlesque the Divine ideal; we are Free Churchmen because we see wings and feathers, and not draperies upon the angels, and a religion which is flaked with resurrection plumes cannot be aught but free. We may be wrong. But the nearer we come to Christ, the more sure are we that we are right. And not till spiritual things are understood will men turn back to a Church which knows its own principles and its own mind; or that the Church will speak with real authority to the world outside. It is no sign that the Church has spoken to the world that the village yokel twitches his forelock at the rector's gaiters, or the hoyden drops a curtsy to the vicar's wife. It will be a better sign of it when it shows to statesmen and to kings that it is not of this world at all; that it is not a lackey for its pomps, or a valet at its pageants; but a light for its illumination and a leaven for its life. When we leave off

talking of religious education, and speak of religious inspiration, we shall show a better understanding of what religion is. And we shall turn to the Church, not as the school for thirty-nine articles, but the Patmos for the vision of one faith.

The world wants Christ, and the Church must show Him to the world. And, till a clearer mirror of His beauty is seen in our spirit and our service, the Church will stand a stony and deserted edifice among the people, and not a beacon for their guidance or a haven in their cares. The men who said, "We would see Jesus," were heathens; yet their desire impelled them. When men find that the Church is the conservatory of sympathy, generosity, and light, they will come to her. But while they find an unelastic straightness in her attitude, and as much Mammon in her policy as pervades the cinder-track of fevered life, what cover or asylum shall their weariness obtain? What guidance or inspiration shall their wistfulness descry? State patronage and control only turns the so-called Church of Jesus Christ into a subsidised shop. There are tradesmen who display the Royal Arms over their show-rooms as purveyors to His Majesty. And such is the business whose showmen are aproned by the State. But the escutcheon of the fishermen is not an effigy of a lion and an unicorn fighting for a crown, but of broken hearts bleeding and contrite at a cross. And no Church that is not free of every fetter of restraint and unshackled from the pomps of pride, can offer Christ's true welcome to the freemen of the Lord. It is too late in the day to shade the light. Men may harness the lightning

but not curb the sun. Yet the twentieth century is flouted with a statute which consigns the very alphabet to the priests. Light is to be shut into the lantern of the hierarch and only spread as he lifts up the slide. In rival places its effect will be that you can only learn while you intone their liturgy, and cannot teach unless you wear their chain. Well may the cry of "Come, Lord Jesus" groan from the hearts which faint after His liberty.

Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace, saying after me, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. Amen."

IV

THE SEARCH FOR THE LIVING GOD

"My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."—Psalm lxxxiv., 2.

I WENT into a Board school the other day, and the blackboard still contained the uneffaced traces of a recent lesson. The lesson seemed to have been to an elementary class, and to have borne reference to punctuation, for there were specimens of the various stops—the comma, the semicolon, the full stop, and all the rest of them. But some ingenious boy had improved upon the master's work, and suspended a drawing of a rope to the tail of the note of interrogation, and a portrait of a man, which I hope was not intended for his teacher, hanging by the neck upon the rope. It occurred to me that there was an undesigned suggestion in this whimsical freak, for many men in actual life seem to strangle themselves with their own questions. There is bound to be anxiety proportionate to the seriousness with which we accept our lives. But it is a mistake to grow so anxious as to twist the whole nature into a note of interrogation. Yet this is what human life comes to

in many instances—and those instances are found amongst its noblest types. The error lies in those where wistfulness is not allied with patience. Men are fretting to find out, and not waiting to be taught. They are saying "What is truth?" while living Truth stands bound in men's bonds before them. The pathos of petition rings through all this text. It is petition whetted by partial satisfaction. It is the cry of a searcher who finds himself on the right scent. It succeeds upon an exclamation of relief. The elusive peace for which he has been in quest has touched the seeker in the tabernacle. "Ah, this is where I shall find it!" It is like a balmy day after long spells of cold. The stifled battler for breath ventures out into the sun-patch now that the east wind has loosed its grip upon his throat, and the Parliament of old men resumes its rheumatic session under the elms upon the common, and the affairs of the world are once more in a fair way of settlement. Baffled hope breathes again, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles!" Hitherto my lungs and my breath have groaned against the dying blight; now my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. The tabernacle may stimulate enquiry, but it broadens hope and brightens light. There is a solemn seriousness in man's position in the world. A seriousness deepened by conscience, and pointed by a sense of duty regarding what is known, and by the seemingly inscrutable mystery of the unknown. This cry after the living God—though, alas! by no means the form which man's search always takes—becomes eventually the inevitable and pathetic longing of his nature. The

more he looks onward and around, the more his life bristles with riddles and frowns with mysteries. There is a sense of duty in regard to them. A challenge to analysis is given. We are not to sit down amidst the fog torpidly waiting till it lifts. There is purpose in our lives, and we are to ascertain it. But some of the obscuring clouds rise out of ourselves. It is a moral mystery which surrounds us—not mere phenomena. These we can investigate for ourselves. But we shall investigate them to more purpose by beginning in the profounder sphere. Revelation will help science far more than science will help revelation. And we shall find this out in proportion as we permit conscience to play her true part amidst the problems and the gloom. Those only will find the living truth who search for the living God. And those only will seek the living God who have discovered in themselves the dying worm of sin. Mere enquiry will never set men on the quest for God. It is a search for deliverance, not knowledge. It is a grope out of a felt darkness towards a promised light. The sense of sin creates the fear of death, and this, again, impels the search after the life Divine. My curiosity and my pride, my enterprise and hunger have a laudable interest in discovery, in law, in natural achievement; but my heart and my flesh cry out for God, and they are impelled to the cry by the chill of mystery, the spur of duty, the goad of conscience, by the sense of sin, and by the fear of death. No doubt the mind has its claims, and it may press them in the school, in the laboratory, from the observatory, with the microscope, the telescope, the treatise, the experiment. But so

has the heart, the conscience, the body. And it is not the coward's voice or the fanatic's faint, but the awakened dream of the roused heart and flesh which crieth for the living God. The man who has come into the courts of the Lord does not want to know; he wants to live. Don't talk to me about the polarisation of light; leave me to bask in it. Don't lecture me; sing to me. Don't galvanise me with batteries; fan me with angels' wings. How learned are thy cloisters, O Baliol and South Kensington—my brain and my ambition desire a "B.Sc." How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. The associations of the sanctuary are associations of renewal. Some bird, with the simple audacity of trust, had nested amongst the altar-horns, and mewed her young under its eaves. Inspired sparrows! Surely their wing must be nervous, and their matin sweet. We often grow depressed amongst the chills and formalities, the negligence and indifference which leave the sanctuary empty. But when we hear the swallows twittering round the pillars, and building their nests amongst the capitals, we pluck up heart and thank God for the birds. "They will be still praising Thee." Our religion is oftentimes depressed by baffled search. The broken heart sighs out, "O that I knew where I might find Him." But that cry is always satisfied in one way. Not by the sudden coming of the seeking soul upon a hiding Lord. Not by His being surprised while wandering, or awaked while sleeping, or unearthed while dreaming; but by His being found close at hand: by the evidence of the cruse and the

pitcher to attest His care; by the grip upon the helpless palm as we are sinking in the water. The vision which the screen of Christian faith discloses is not that of man seeking God, but of God seeking man. It lays all its stress on this. As soon as sin brought shame in its dry track, it showed man flying from God's face. And the "Where art thou?" which intensified his fear was the beginning of that long waiting to be gracious which is not ended yet, but which halted at the Cross. Man's need is God, and Christ is the Divine answer to his need. And what is the answer to the dying Christ? A living man. My heart and flesh crieth out for the living God. And what does He show me? A dying Saviour. Yes; that is the altarpiece at which I fall. But when I lift my head the canvas of the Cross is folded up. All is changed. I have been to the tomb: but they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. Even the tabernacle is passed away, and is a tabernacle no longer. The temple has been destroyed. But the three days are past, and it is raised again—and it is raised, not in gateways and porticos and pillars and pinnacles and cupolas, but in wings and glory, and the outcry of my heart and flesh is answered in the vision of the living God—crucified for my sin, risen again for my justification. Is the vision satisfactory? If not, it is because you have never seen it. You have not found how amiable are His tabernacles. You say you have been day by day into His house, that you have not missed a Sabbath for these months or years gone by. Yet you have never seen this vision. That is quite possible.

Sunday. The familiar sound of bells. The hush upon the traffic. Perhaps the school, the practice, and the service. But the bells lost resonance. The stillness grew monotonous; the school grew garrulous; the practice became disenchanted; the service turned out tedious. Why was that? Was it our fault? Likely enough if it were our voice you had turned out to hear. Perhaps the link of some companionship got broken. Perhaps some human association lost its sweetness. Your interest failed because someone else went away. If the Church was but a place of assignation, no wonder the amiability of the tabernacle is weakened like Samson when he lifted his shorn pate from the false strumpet's lap. But if you brought a longing soul into His courts; if you came "faint for the flaming of His advent feet"; if your assignation was with the troubadour who sings of sacrifice, it were a small thing to miss the charm of music or of preaching. The enchantment of the tabernacle was a deeper thing than these. It was the breast which solaced John at the last meal. It was the tone which startled despondence into ecstasy. "Children, have ye any meat?" It was the hospitality which said "Come and dine," with the lips on which the seal had yesterday been set. The tabernacles of the Lord are amiable, because the thirst of the soul is cooled and satisfied, because despair has dared to part its veil, and has looked into the face of hope; because the doves about the windows are the angels of the loves we thought were dead; because not only music and dancing are on its pavement, but life and resurrection are in the air. You must have these associations

with the sanctuary ere you can sing this psalm. The vision must inspire the song. "So as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." Seen Thee. Is it for this you come? Is it of this you sing; for this you pray; on this you meditate; in this you revel? The seer saw the river clear as crystal, the sea of fire and of burnished glass, and the tree of life with leaves for the world's healing. And those who are borne upon the force of faith, and carried on the lift of love into the sanctuary, may see those aisles with that seer's eyes like streams of crystal, and this cold space shall glow with fire, or leap into luxuriance. Simply because it is your trysting-place with Christ. It will be a little thing that the music may have dragged, of small moment that our homily was halting. The programme will be swallowed in apocalypse. We talk about going to Heaven, and waiting for this and that until we get there. If our thirst were the impatience of desire, we might go to Heaven once a week; or Heaven would come to us in every visit to the temple. The possibilities of a Sabbath Day are infinite. And, could we but know a tithe of what we miss in our restricted ideals of the day of rest, our expectancy of the Sabbath of the Lord our God would be the tiptoe of the athlete and the hunger of the roe upon the mountains. An ideal Sabbath is the nearest to Elysium that earth can go—because earth lifts us above itself. It is the great *Yes* to every doubting question of unfaith. It comes with a pen dipt in the gold of full assurance to score out every "if" and "but" that has silted on the musings of the week into the mind. "Is God my Father? Does

Christ love me? Has He saved me to the uttermost?" "No," says the cynic snarl of Monday. "Love you!" says the timorous tongue of Tuesday; "is it likely?" "Not He!" comes the cawing chorus of the rooks and ravens of the waning week—on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. "YES!" cries the bird that hails the Sabbath daybreak. "Yes!" whispers the tender tremble of the matin-bell. "Yes!" laugh the little children as they trip towards the infant class, where the name of "Jesus" still stands unrubbed upon the blackboard, and no note of interrogation tempts the boys to hang their Master on its tail. "Yes!" sings the rising hymn, the gentle prayer, the quiet homily. "Yes!" chirp the sparrows who have found an house, and the swallows who have built a nest among her altars. God is my Father. Christ my Saviour! Heaven my home. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in tents of questioning and unbelief—for a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.

V

THE GOSPEL DEFINED

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." —Jude, 20, 21.

THE inspiration and authenticity of this brief Epistle, like those of its more elaborate associates, have sometimes been called in question, though its claim to a place in the sacred canon has long been established in the opinion of a distinguished array of erudite and devout men. Among the more patristic of these will be found the names of Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome, while Mill, Hammond, Lardner, and Macknight are enrolled among the more modern apologists. The drift and tendency of the Epistle strengthens the merely literary evidence of its sacred origin. It was indited to counteract the pernicious doctrine promulgated by the enemies of the faith that the grace of God is magnified by licentiousness. Against this blasphemy, Jude, whose name occurs as Judas, brother of James, given in 6th chapter of Luke, as well as that given

in the opening chapter of the Acts, opens the thunder of his brief but most forcible address.

We feel ourselves invited by the Epistle generally and the 20th and 21st verses particularly to take special notice of

I

the Apostle's definition of the Gospel which we profess.

It is a definition indicating its transcendent wisdom, its transforming power, and its inviolable sanctions. There is a discrimination shown through all the vehemence of the Epistle through which the *wisdom* of the Gospel is made to shine conspicuously. The writer never suffers his angry disgust at the principle against which he inveighs to lead him into an extravagant strain by which the sobriety of his endeavour would be compromised. He sets forth the freedom of the truth he preaches, rather than its restrictions, as the answer to those who would contaminate and abuse it. He indicates the liberty of Christian truth as an antidote against the licentiousness of a carnal excess. He proffers the bridle of the Gospel as a liberating medium against the excesses of the flesh. The sensualist is the slave; the Christian is the freeman. Licentiousness is restriction, because, by thickening the flesh, it curbs the wing of the spirit. And thus the transforming quality of the Gospel is shown forth: a power by which the orbit of contemplation is enlarged, and its inviolable sanctions are claimed and enlisted on the side of purity, which is the release from corruption and the avenue to life.

II

Having thus defined the Gospel, the writer proceeds to urge a forcible exhortation in regard to it. "Building up," etc. (verse 20). This building up upon the faith is to be effected by a salutary dread of moral error, by a thoughtful study of the Divine Word, by unrest in all present attainment, and by mutual conference, co-operation, and work. The foe against whom he is contending is ever before him—this horrible deification of vice that truth may be enforced. It is the same enormity which came before Paul's mind—continuing in sin that grace might abound. Only here it is before the Apostle as an accretion raked up in an avowed doctrine, and it reeks offensively in his nostrils. Hence he urges those to whom he writes to be upon their guard against errors such as these. He sees how fatal and how foul they are. If a man gorges the flesh, he starves out the spirit. Grace cannot abound if sin impedes it. Truth is the asylum and the altar-horn from sin—not the finger-post and beacon towards grace. He would turn them to a study of those Divine records wherein the more excellent way is set forth. It is herein that the perfect law of liberty is seen. And he foresees that there will be begotten of such a study, in proportion as it is thorough and devout, an unrest and dissatisfaction in present spiritual acquisitions. And, again, out of that unrest will be born that spirit of gregarious and mutual interchange by which the spiritual life is helped and fed. Just as a meal is more enjoyable when it is social and not solitary, so is spiritual life

keener when sustained by mutual counsel and interchange. And by assembling together men learn the deeper enjoyments of the Divine life.

III

Notice, therefore, further, the hallowed methods which are commended—"praying in the Holy Ghost."

Such prayer is to be prosecuted in humble dependence on all promised aid—with a just appreciation of the blessings sought, with absolute confidence in the Divine faithfulness, and with holy fervour and solicitude. These are the elements which must pervade and characterise all real aspiration. Such aids as God has promised are indispensable to successful prayer. The Divine mind and sympathy anticipated the difficulties which must ever beset His creature in approaching Him. He has set before us the essentials of prevailing access. He who cometh to God must believe that He is—and that He is the rewarder of such as diligently seek Him. And this faith in and use of the aids which He has promised will be quickened by our estimate of the boon we seek when we are asking for the fruitions of the Gospel of His grace. There should be no misgiving as to the willingness or power of the Helper. I sometimes think that if we were absolutely sure of receiving the gifts we crave at the Divine footstool, we should be less miscellaneous and vague in what we ask. We ask too much for asking's sake. But if much of what we ask were given there and then, it would come as a sort of spiritual white elephant, and we should not know

what to do with it. We need to seek capacity for the reception and enjoyment of the things we ask from God. But here the Apostle helps us to define the great advantages which he urges us to expect, and, anticipating the effect, our solicitude and fervour are increased. For our text sets before us to a very large degree

IV

the blessed sequence or consequence of the answer to our quest—"you will keep yourselves in the love of God." This surely includes or implies that we shall keep ourselves in supreme delight in His love, in humble hope of personal interest in it, and in the genuine, though faint, reflection of it. It is only now and then that anything like an adequate conception of what the love of God is—and can do for us—really takes hold upon our thought. And it is only at such times that it emerges from a mere phrase and becomes a thrilling and abiding fact in our esteem. Do I often realise—have I ever realised, this great truth—*God loves me?* When it has come to me have I opened my heart to it that it may fill me with its fulness? Have I not rather sought to put it away as too extreme and impossible! God love me! How should He? Why should He? He so great—I so little. He so high—I so low. He so engrossed—I so insignificant. The small resorts of a miscalled humility have been at my beck and call, either to get away from considering God's personal interest in me or to merge it into a sort of generality. Fatherhood if you will—but not my Father. These close quarters are avoided. Is not this because we are not at all

times desirous of our Father's presence and inspection? We would rather see Him busy with the general interests of the world than have Him too near and intimate with the secrets of our own heart and life. Our humble hope should deepen into delighted assurance of our interest in this love—and then the faintness of our reflection of it would grow distincter, and it would spread its light in our answering love to Him and our affection for each other.

V

For notice, again, the habitual attitude he justifies —"looking for the mercy," etc. This anticipation must imply a modified or abated appreciation of all present good, an abiding sense of dependence, unshaken confidence, and yearning towards redeeming fulness. We cannot be maintaining a strenuous or clear outlook towards the future whilst the present is supreme. Our estimate of passing things must be abated that the medium through which we look forward may be dispurged of what would cloud the vision. Our position of dependence upon the mercy of God will never strike us in its full measure of helplessness while we are living in the whirl of mere temporal and temporary cares. The very energy which the task of the passing day demands should impel us to the great Source from which that energy is supplied. And the success with which the passing task is faced should fill us with confidence in the strength by which the future may be met. And thus the growth towards the fulness of the redeemed soul is reached and perfected out of the instalments of help we gather for our daily task.

VI

A theme like this should fill us with many and sublime solicitudes. Solicitudes lest we should recede rather than advance. Let us mark our footsteps. Where were we yesterday? Where are we to-day? We sing "Nearer, my God, to Thee." Are we any nearer? Is it only singing—or have we reached another stage towards the vision beatific? Are we only intent upon the tune, or have we a better glimpse of the features we admire? With the dread of retrogression and the desire of advance will come a burning wish to bring others to join us on the way. We are journeying to the place of which God hath spoken. Come with us, and we will do you good—for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. Is this our impulse and ascription? As we advance we can never be contented to advance alone. We may gauge our own growth by the expansion of the missionary spirit in our souls. And this missionary spirit will take its true and legitimate shape. It will proceed in the Divine order, beginning at Jerusalem, beginning at home—for our solicitude will be that, as a Christian people, we may abide steadfast in the faith. What we mean by the faith is not an orthodox creed—though that is not unimportant—but a tenacious and clinging hold upon a living Christ. Believe in Christ. Not things about Him, but His living, loving Self. Come near enough to Him to behold Him, and you will find that in His sympathy and companionship to help you into the mystery of God manifest in the flesh. Come near enough to hear

His voice, and you will learn enough to make you cry, "Never man spake like this Man!" Come near enough to touch His wounds, and you will soon find yourself exclaiming, "My Lord and my God." We begin at the wrong end. We try to learn about Christ first and to know Christ Himself next. We treat Him as an applicant for our patronage, and ask His character from His last place. Well, He can stand that test. Ask the sick Christian on the bed where he or she has lain for months and years. "Tedious months and years," I had nearly said. But no. Not tedious. They would have been tedious but for Him. The room would have been lonely—but He has never left it. But this is not the way. Go straight to Him yourself, and then you will not wonder at the stories of the might of the everlasting arm, of the searching sweetness of the word, at the tender sorcery of the look, the tone, the sympathy. Man's attitude towards religion is one long committee of enquiry, a committee which never adjourns, but is always debating, which is for ever moving amendments, but which never amends. And why this consequential committee, which is always "left sitting" like an obstinate Parliament by one generation after another? Simply because man's self-conceit is boundless. He likes to sign himself "yours faithfully." He prefers to say the matter "shall have his best attention" to any more cordial style. I always feel a prejudice towards an unknown correspondent who puts "yours faithfully" at the bottom of his letters. There is a smug savour of patronage about it that one's soul resents. "Yours truly"—or "cordially"—or "affec-

tionately" if you like—but not "yours faithfully." It swells with self-conceit. It is like saying, "You have a powerful auxiliary in me, and as long as you behave yourself, and deserve my confidence, I will take you under my protection." And, of course, the other form, which promises that the matter shall have our best attention, is but a pompous way of shelving it altogether. It is a conventional method of relegating it to the pigeon-hole of oblivion or to the waste-paper basket of destruction. But it airs the writer's self-importance in an atmosphere of urbanity. "Our best attention." What a distinction! The matter must be settled propitiously for ever under such splendid patronage! And this is the spirit in which the mass of what are called thinking men and religious men deal with God and His truth. He comes to them as sinners and offers them His Gospel. They write back to Him "yours faithfully," and offer to give the matter their best attention. "This is a faithful saying," etc. "Behold the Lamb of God." "God commendeth His love toward us—for the ungodly." "We duly received your advice, and have instructed our Professor Dry-as-dust to look into the matter, and, as soon as matters of pressing importance in reference to our business and regarding the programme of the London season have been adjusted, we will hope to correspond further on the subject you have brought before us, and it shall receive our best attention.—Yours faithfully, Mammon, Grubb, & Co."

And a patient, long-suffering Redeemer waits in Heaven for your best attention! "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and love of Christ."

Awake, ye self-engrossed drones in the worm-holes of what you call your business. You are too busy, forsooth; so you leave religion to children, women, and angels. Redemption is not for your convenience, but for your life. Religion is not for your investigation, but for your acceptance; not for your best consideration, but for your penitent embrace. You can't wait till your bookworms have smothered it in polysyllables; you must take it in its naked, stark, and urgent love. The Cross! Clasp it for dear life, and clasp it now; for behold, to-day is the accepted time, and to-day is the day of salvation.

VI

HUMAN AND MATERIAL CHANGE

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the deap shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."—I. Cor. xv., 50-52.

It is usual to read these and like words pensively, and with an awe begotten of their weirdness. But on the contrary, they should carry the ring of encouragement and inspiration to their reader. There is enough in this world to give attraction to the healthy mind as we pass through it; but surely not enough to make it satisfactory to our ideals as a permanent abode. And all whose hopes and ambitions have in any degree partaken of the expansion and enlargement that they are intended to acquire in Jesus Christ will rejoice in the momentum they receive from the anticipations which such portents give of the future and final economy. It becomes, therefore, an inspiration rather than a check, to regard the characteristic features of the future life of the soul, and to try to penetrate the perspective which opens before prophetic thought.

The visions of Patmos were not depressing but entrancing to the Apostle on whom their apocalypse arose; and our spiritual faculty should find refreshment rather than exhaustion by any endeavour to climb in his footsteps or follow his flight. Whenever men have been permitted to catch a glimpse, however transient, of the unseen, the subsequent or attendant bewilderment has always been accompanied by a rapt uplifting and an afterglow of joy. It was so with the mystery of Tabor, despite the incoherency of the proposal of three tabernacles and the divided honour. It was so with the arrested penitent of the Damascus road, and the very blindness born out of the glory was but the child of a fuller glory that excelleth. In proportion as the visions we have had of what lies behind the veil have been real and solid revelations, they have left a picture of enhanced delight and not a haze of weirdness and of dread. When the voices that have come to us have been Divine, they have come to chide misgiving and to make us brave. We are told it is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but it is the delight of God to reveal it. The concealment is reluctant; the revelation is alert. The veil is lowered till we can bear the light; it is lifted when the pupil can look up. Therefore we may dwell upon the features of the future state as a part of our education for its experience. We may anticipate the closing of the drama of time with presages of expectancy and hope. And it is with no creepy damp of soul that we attest the conviction that such a crisis is not the result of natural causes, but rather of the sovereign will of God. The seer from his rock beheld an angel, and

heard a declaration that time should be no longer. It was a decree of authority, not an evolution of phenomena. He who had created could also arrest; and it is His pleasure to interpose in the fulness of the time. Science descants of periods, of æons, and of ages, during which secret processes have been working, and the slow gestation of nature has been moving. It points to the black trail of fire and to the marl-beds of volcanoes which have boiled up oceans, and in whose heat deep seas have hissed and bubbled into nothingness. But just as anterior to the first pang of the great travail there was a Will which gave it birth, so shall that self-same Will, of its own sovereign accord, declare it finished. That Will found voice in its own chosen time to say, "Let there be light!" and the obedient sun has burnished creation, marked the seasons, nursed the growths, and lamped the people ever since. And just as you or I can quench a candle when the morning pales its flame, so will that power withdraw the orb which has waited on His will because its work is done. And it will not be to put another in its place, but to replace it by the living light of His own face. "They need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

If this is the order of the change which shall pass on nature and on created things, so is it the order of the change which shall pass on human souls on crossing the bar between the temporal and the unseen. From fitful skies to sunless light; from sunset and evening star to the fixed noon of ageless resurrection;

from the coy caprices of eclipse and day to where there is no night; from jumbled shine and shadow into a pure meridian; from the coquetry of a tantalising change to the fidelity of a smile that never darkens; from the paleness of the light that fails into the sweetness of the light that is perennial—this is the transition. We have seen it on the faces of our dead: just enough of God's beauty to make us know it is all well; just enough of Christ's kiss to check the jealousy that would have called them back. This is no fatalistic evolution; it is done by the Divine power working in love upon God's children as they pass. It is Christ stepping into the boat as they cross the stormy strait. It is the Master waking from the pillow as they sink down upon it, with the sweat-drops of the rowing merging in His smile. It is the hand of the Walker on the wave lifting the sinking follower—"Wherefore dost thou doubt, O thou of little faith?"

The changes which shall ultimately pass upon created things may be the sequel of entire dissolution. We are told that old things shall pass away, and that all things shall become new. The panorama shows a new heaven and a new earth, a New Jerusalem, whose features of novelty seem radical and essential. But concerning ourselves we read of a glorified body, the same body passing into the environment of a new light; a re-clothed personality with its features sublimated to its renewal. From this we may conjecture that our change will be one of mode and adaptation, not of essence or of nature. It may not be the same world, but we shall be the same men. The earth and all that is therein may be destroyed, but the

very flame that consumes these shall be the element which refines our identity into its abiding life. We need not try to speculate on the semblance under which we shall be thus perpetuated. We can gain no prophetic photograph of the glorified body. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. Enough that we shall be "like Him." He saw us "as we are," and was content to become "like us." When we shall "see Him as He is," we shall be admitted to the gracious reciprocity of being "like Him." When He took our nature He took its every infirmity but sin, its weakness, its lassitude, its liability to exhaustion, pain, distress. When we shall be assimilated to His risen likeness we shall discard the physical features of growth, fatigue, endurance, and decay, and put on an incorruption which will replace and defy them all. So that whatever resemblance may abide to the bodies in which we are at present clothed will be dissociated from the infirmities with which they are encumbered and defaced. A glorified body. Not glorified through a struggling eclipse of aches and pains, but flaming with its own energy and alert in the joyance of a quenchless youth. The pensiveness which deigns to walk will walk without faintness; the strenuousness which essays to run will run and not be weary; and the afflatus which aspires towards the throne will mount upon wings as eagle's. This changed body will be dispurged of grossness and made subservient to the functions of intellect and soul. The law of gravitation, which draws us earthward, fleshward, devilward, will be reversed, and a pinion of the soul will spread that it may nestle with a restful pride in

the bosom of the Father. The uplifted eye will answer to an "Ephaphtha" which can dare the day, not in a coy askance which sets it blinking at the twilight. When the soul passes upward to its berth among the burgesses of the Holy City and takes its franchise with the freemen of the Lord, it will come into the Church of the firstborn, and its transmuted seeming will be that of the firstborn of every creature. It will partake of the change which shall have passed over the dispensation itself. And what a change is that! Look upon this picture and on this. The Old Jerusalem and then the New. The Old adorned with the Temple in which Solomon's glory is sullied by the Pharisees' formality; where the heartbreak of the publican is shadowed by the boaster's pride; where the sordid gabble of the bird-sellers drowns prayer and praise, and makes choir and altar a dumb show. The Old, a rendezvous of pilgrims with fictitious burdens and of votaries with false vows; where the footprints of the seer have been shuffled out by the pretender, and the harlot's whisper spoils the incantation of the teacher's word. The Old, whose reddened lavers are ensanguined with the butcher stains of those who killed the prophets, and whose bypaths are yet rugged with the stones that Stephen felt. The Old, whose suburbs are yet darkened by the shadow of the Cross, and whose daisies cannot grow under the blight of the great tragedy. The Old, whose ruined heaps proclaim the poor ambition which hated Cæsar more than it loved Christ. The New, which bids the Patmos seer search in vain for Temple towers, because the living Temple is the Lamb whose shambles made

the ruin of the Old. The New, which has no altar, because the worship is all praise. The New, to whose foundation-stone the wax of Cæsar's broken seal still sticks in memory of a grave despoiled and of a death defeated. The New, whose commerce is the traffic of redemption, and whose councils are the politics of love. The changed citizen will be fitted for the changed city. Dweller and dwelling-place will be alike in harmony. The discord of "Crucify Him!" will be merged in the concord of "Crown Him!" Even its pathos will be tremulous with joy. It is said that on the eyeball of the slain may sometimes be discerned the picture of the man who slew him. Ah, then, what picture shall you see upon the pupil of the King Who sitteth in His beauty? Whose but your own? Not the hireling of Herod, or the minion of Pilate, or the caitiff of Caiaphas. I look, and see just myself. But, seeing the picture through the tears of penitence, and beholding it framed in the completed priesthood of redemption, I see it without remorse or even shame. His blessing is beforehand with my blush, and He Who hid the shudder of the prodigal empurples me in the best robe ere I have time to weep. For the saints in the new city shall find in it a material habitation. The place which He has prepared shall be disclosed, and the many mansions shall be allotted to the citizens. Much that is excellent and essential here will be superseded there. It were but a vain conjecture to muse upon the permanent employments which will engross eternity. But at least they will differ from our occupation here in the exclusion of all elements of competing rivalry. The social and

municipal and political machineries which grow out of the struggle for existence and whose frictions are so painful here will be unneeded, because the jealousies which make men strain for greatness will be stifled in that rarer atmosphere where each esteems another better than himself. The cast-iron philosophy of the survival of the fittest will melt into the fluidity of a common cause. The fittest there shall be the angel with the weakest wing. Whatever change may have come upon the King, He will show that He is the same Who called the little children and found a welcome for the weary and the heavy laden. Fitness is feebleness—if feebleness finds suffrage in the heavens. If there is crowding or jostling, it would be a backward pressure to let the humbler ones come forward. The inhabitants, being indefectible and free from selfishness and guile, will need no restrictions in institutions or in laws. What is beautiful here will have no place there. We place an effigy of Moses on our courts of law, and hang a sheaf of keys or a festoon of black chains across our prison gates. We carve a bust of Solomon for our schools, of some philanthropist for our asylums, and paint a cartoon of the Healer for our hospitals. But there will be no place for these, and the living Lord will be the substitute for all. The prisoners are prisoners of hope, and Moses hands the tables and the keys to Him who opens doors and scatters chains. It will be all school and yet all holiday; and, if Pentecost made grammars obsolete, in Heaven we shall all be linguists of the Light. Is this all prophetic? Has the mantle of the car dropped so coyly at our feet as to bring no chal-

lenge or assurance? Has no Elisha dared to touch it and slip it on his shoulders? Does the rolling Jordan so engross your fear that the cloak of confidence cannot arouse your hope? Is it so imaginary, so unsubstantial and unreal that you have never sought to trust the current of its tendency? Surely we have enough fore-glimpses of this change to warn and help us to live as seeing the invisible. We may see, if we will, although it be but through a glass darkly. And even while we walk by faith, the encampment of the angels is so close as to bring the future into the range of sight. As life moves on, the leaves fall from the trees, and, while they strip the branches of their charm, the light shines yet more clearly through. The future strengthens as the present fades. The veil gets thinner, and the filmy web is glowing with the light beyond. We can almost hear the lightsome tread of feet, or the beating of approaching wings. And, as we know the footstep of our best beloved, so we can almost tell the tread of dear souls gone before—

> She is coming, my own, my sweet,
> With ever as airy a tread;
> My heart doth hear her and beat,
> Were it earth in an earthly bed.

We are not simply left to muse upon these things. They are not playthings for the fancy, toys of a trance, freaks of a dream, or colouring for poetry. They are full truths, freighted and fraught with challenge and appeal. They bid us get sweetened for participation, meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. The world is a bad schoolhouse for the

training. A world of shop and rivalry. A world of stepping-stones and ladders, where the ladder is the shoulders of a downtrod brother, and the prizes are purloined from the diffident and weak. But when a husbandman contrives a garden whence he would gather fruit, he builds his wall to face the south, that gentle airs may rock the roots and blander suns may kiss the buds, and he trains his vines against kind trellisses which shall lift them from the earth, and hold their fibres as they curl about them in a trustful grasp. So if we are to bring forth fruits meet for a repentance which need not be repented of, it is Christward we must turn. The lattice of our growth must be the Cross; and while it carries our sins, we, too, may carry its sorrows, and look bravely onward with His eyes, Who, for the joy that was before, endured it all. If time, the world, old age are hardening the hope within you, invoke that quickening which comes with the embraces of the Holy Ghost. And the chrysallis which is stiffening in the frosts and deserts of the world shall give evidence of an embryo life which waits to break its prison. And when at length it breaks away it shall show the wings which have beaten down the bars, and they shall strengthen in the noon which has loved them into life. The tired workman falls upon his bed with the ache of his day's work upon his limbs, and sleeps till early morning. And the bell or hooter wakes him with the dawn, and he leaps up, a changed man, strong for the battle of the day. But he wakes to work and tire again, and wear out another link of the heavy chain of life. But the voice of the archangel calls the sleeping saint to

lyric labours which know no exhaustion, to a service which is its own momentum, and a warfare which is bloodless with the joy of its own victory. It sounds sublime. And so it is. But it is the simple outcome of the unselfish following of Christ. For he or she who steps through the open door of Heaven steps out into its light from the patient drudgery and duty of the humblest home of earth. We spring from bended knees to outspread wings. And those who find a Jerusalem of praise before must leave a Bethany of prayer behind.

VII

CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY

"He who loveth God shall love his brother also."—I. John iv., 21.

A POPULAR preacher drew "loud cheers" from his congregation of working men by picturing Christ on Hampstead Heath surveying London, and resolving to give purer water and build better dwellings for the people before teaching them the doctrine of the Trinity. Anything of that kind is safe to draw the assent of the crowd. But there is an element of claptrap in it—not intended, probably, by the preacher, who is far too real a man to stoop consciously to any such expedients, but gravitating rather broadly in the modern tendency towards diluting the spirituality of Christ's religion into a material prescription for the body instead of a life for the soul. That Christ touched life at all points we, of course, admit. And that those who love Him and would imitate Him must help their fellows all they can we admit too. But if Christ came and surveyed London from Hampstead Heath, or from the Monument, or from Clapham Common, or anywhere else, there is no doubt that He would look upon it with pity for its sins, for the moral

evil which creates its material impurity, and that He would direct His first endeavours to the teaching of the mind and the elevation of the heart, and leave the ventilation of sewers to the wisdom of progressive County Councillors who may happen to be out of jail, and the erection of houses on the "flat" system to speculative builders unwrecked by the "Liberator." The men who preach what Carlyle first taught them to call "gospels" of drainage, and pure air, and short hours, and wages, and the like, are the shrewd caterers who hit the current taste of the hour by pandering to their distaste for deeper and better things. The Christians of chemistry, whose message treats of legislation for this and against that, and measures out cubic feet of air, and is eloquent on traps and ball-taps, are wise in their generation, but rather stunted as children of the regeneration. The secular press, which snubs and sneers and gibes and jeers at the herald who points a struggling faith to look towards the invisible, will praise the man and advertise the Church which ply the leverage of free libraries and of bi-weekly half-holidays; but it is hardly a robust or full Christianity which limits the horizon of the Master Himself to the range of a local board or of a parish vestry.

The philanthropy of Jesus was a love for man's soul. The soap and water which cleansed and the food which fed His body were but adjuncts of His more far-reaching purpose. Society may wisely take the latter under its special care, and the society preacher may narrow his ministry to this that he may be belauded as "broad" by a constituency which sees

no further. But fidelity to the Master's spirit will not collapse the afflatus of His soul-winning love to a system of tenements and lavatories. And the Christian Church will approximate nearer to its true function, not when it pleads less for fresh air and pure water, but when it is less afraid and less ashamed to breathe forth the air of immortality and unsluice the river of the Water of Life.

When John pointed to Christ, it was as the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. When Jesus cried, "Whoso thirsteth, come unto Me and drink," it was to the lips of the soul He held the cup. He taught the people even before He fed them, and they forgot their hunger in the fulness of their souls. And it is not true to say He would begin with clean houses before caring for clean hearts. The ideal Jesus upon Hampstead Heath is not the real Christ of the five loaves and two fishes. Such miniatures are but puppet Christs for retrogressive Progressists to dance to. Whatever He might say about the doctrine of the Trinity, Christ's first pity would be for the sinner, and His first sympathy for the soul. He would leave it to philanthropy to lead to the prayer meeting through the gymnasium while He led to the gymnasium through the prayer meeting. And unless we would disestablish our Churches from the Rock on which they were built, and turn them into clubs and vestry halls, we must place their first function with the souls of men, and aim to bring into them the image of Christ by treating them as the temples of the Holy Ghost. When you preach Christ in His life of doctrine and in His doctrine of life, you

give the best health lecture, and expound the truest chemistry. Nay, it is alchemy, which carries its own charm to lift up the cross as He adorns it, and it will be when it is lifted faithfully, fearlessly, and unflinchingly that it will justify its own magnetism—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

It is well to rally Christians and the Christian Church to their true places and functions in the sweetening of human life and the lightening of human burdens. It is a scandal that the claims of sanitation and the like should be overlooked so much by Christians, or that there should be apathy among those who are evangelical and religious about the temporal welfare of the people, which leaves it to the mere shrewdness of a society which sees that it best protects itself by spreading cleanliness to take up the mission of lustration. But true Christliness sees man as a whole in all his needs. It is our limitation and inability to do much at once which makes our functions partial. The Christian, trying to look at his brother through Christ's eyes, sees in him the image of God—marred and blurred sadly, but capable of being restored; and hence he deems, and rightly deems, his first function is to turn the burning glass of Christ upon the soul. "But I'm hungry. My children are pale and squalid. I'm cabined, cribbed, confined in a noisome place which is all I know of home, and your silken congregations pass me by, and don't want the likes o' me in what they call the House of God." There's too much truth in it. And it is the reaction from the sting which the conviction of

its truth inflicts that leads to pulpit proclamations which put Christian doctrine in the background, and hide it behind ventilators and drain-pipes. But true philanthropy must be an object-lesson of the doctrine of it. Do not dwarf Christ to accommodate Him to your philanthropy, but elevate your philanthropy to a reflection of Christ's love. If you do this you will not be found disparaging Christian doctrine—be it the doctrine of the Trinity or any other—but weaving Christian doctrine into practical human life. What you learn of Christ in the Church will impel you to a philanthropy which shall help the world. But, if you shut out the vital doctrines of Christ's teaching from the Church, you won't learn much of Him when you enter it. Take away the lesson-books, and the mere shelf is a barren thing. Turn the Master out of the school, and there is little use in paying school fees for your child. And a Church which substitutes a lecturer on oxygen in place of the mind of the Spirit is not the fortress of a forward movement but the ambush of retrogressive retreat, into which we withdraw that we may tout for a constituency instead of train and elevate a people. The corporeal claim is more pressing with the vast majority than the spiritual; and where loaves and fishes most abound the hungry will most surely gather. And it is a shame that the material things are so far lacking. But the first duty of the Christian Church is to do as Christ did, and try to feed the soul. It is hers to create a demand for which the Master made the first supply. It is a libel to say that Christianity as represented by the Churches has no sympathy with the temporal environ-

ment of the people. And it is a libel so odious that the hearts and consciences of her truest priesthood revolts from it. And in our dread and loathing of it we lower our aim from the eternal to the temporal and from the spiritual to the carnal. But the plaudits of the people are dearly bought at the price of the displeasure of God; and it were better that man should scrawl "narrow" on our walls than that Deity should write "Ichabod" upon our gates. When Jesus spoke the parable of the Good Samaritan, it was to evoke from the too contemplative disciple and from the too careless or slip-shod follower the practical side of His religion. It was to teach that His truth was a Gospel of sympathy and brotherhood as well as ethics and theology. But it simply pointed out what man can do of himself, and what he ought to do by himself. "Give ye them to eat," He said to His disciples. He would not have told them to do it if they could not do it. It was because it came within the orbit of their reach that He laid the task and privilege of the feeding of the people at their door. But though they could carry bread and serve tables they could not heal souls. This was His and His only. And He took it into His own hands. The Physician of souls could take no partners, but must write His own prescriptions; and therefore to say that if He looked on London the first thing He would do would be to drain and water it, is a bathos of the Divine function of the Resurrection and the Life. He bids you do that. He bids the councils and the boards and commissioners do that: not as Christians, but as men, as human, sympathetic,

brotherly neighbours. But when He defines the work and directs the voice of His own Church it is His own work and His own voice He leaves to her. Let the people feed the people, but let My minister preach My truth; let him preach the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Cross. The greater must include the less, not the less exclude the greater; and the greater must precede the less, not the less supersede the greater. When I go into a poor man's house and see his poverty, I must feed His body ere I speak about his soul. But this is simply because I can do this, and my heart will not let me rise to the sublime on the neglect of the simple. I go to him as a man, and only as a man. But if he comes into the Church, the minister must precede the man, and the doctrine must postpone the dole.

Our contention is that out of the life which is most reverent towards and faithful to the deep doctrines of Christ's life and teaching will spring the richest and most consistent philanthropy, and, therefore, in the order of importance and proportion, this deeper teaching comes first. This is the work of the Church, and she lowers it when, under pretence of sympathy, she disparages her call to special teaching. But from that special teaching will come the momentum to entire beneficence, and its redundancy will flow out in deeds of brotherhood, and thus the Church is the true reservoir of the refreshment of the world. The spiritual is the parent and well-spring of the temporal, and the soundest theologian should be the most practical philanthropist. The dreams of universal brotherhood which have flitted through the visions of

unspiritual men have resulted in realities of universal anarchy. The theory of Socialism which was germinant before the French Revolution, beautiful as many of its ideal features were, only culminated in the holocaust with which that horror reddened history. Jean Jacques Rousseau, the most chastened and perfervid apostle of the new faith, would send his own children to the Foundling Hospital as fast as they were born, to save the outlay of their support—proving that a godless philanthropy hides a dagger in the folds of its white robe; and that beneficence unborn of Christ, and unbaptised of Calvary, is an effigy and not a soul.

Helping and healing were its methods of philanthropy. And helping and healing must be yours and mine if we are Christians. That bag which Judas carried, but which Jesus drained among the poor, was filled at first with the hard savings of the Carpenter Himself. And it is not the rich who take to it first, or stick to works of beneficence the longest; much less is it the infidel enthusiasts or agnostic disparagers of Christ—but those who learn and love His doctrine, and find in it His living soul. Amateur almoners soon tire, and hectic visitation soon beats retreat. It needs the constancy of Christ for a constant ministry, and only the love of Christ loves on for ever. You and I can help—and we must see that our part is done. And we can heal; if not by the miracle that He wrought, at least by the miracles of science which are working in our midst. But Christianity should be the basis of our science—not science of our Christianity. "Christ would preach the doctrine of drainage first—

and the doctrine of the Trinity second, if at all," says our modern and popular apostle. I don't believe it. I believe He would preach the doctrine of the Trinity first. There may be no magic in the web of this garment that I wear to heal the plague of any stricken who come behind me in the press. But if the doctrine of the Trinity lives out its fulness in my life, the healing miracle is mine; and, if I can impart the secret, I transmute the plague into a resurrection. "He that loveth God shall love his brother also." But he will not love his brother fully till he loves God. And he can't love God till he knows Him; and when he knows the doctrine of the Trinity he will know Him best. Let me tell you what I mean. I am no more of a stickler for abstract doctrine than you are. Go and do good works. Go and help and heal. Don't preach drainage, but do a kind action. And that kind action shall teach you the doctrine of the Trinity. Shakespeare says, "The quality of mercy is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." I say it is thrice blessed—there's a third in it. There is you who give, I who receive, and Christ who impels. So there is Father, Son, and Spirit in it. Christ is all and each. He is the One and only One. Yet there are three. He Who is the Spirit of the whole—the Giver, Who is as a Father—the Receiver, as a Son. There is the doctrine of the Trinity, and Christ preaches it. Don't let us depreciate doctrine, but find practice in doctrine and doctrine in practice. The doctrine is the fuel and the fire and the steam—the act is but the engine. We learn of Christ, but the lesson is a heart-beat and a

pulse. He who loves Him must love his brother, for he finds Christ in his brother and his brother in Christ. It is what we do which will be the test at last. But we cannot do unless we learn. Doctrine and deed must go together, and the deed will be the offspring of the doctrine. "Ye did it unto Me. Ye did it not to Me." This is the test. Touch the fallen, and you touch Christ's hands and side. Neglect or starve the hungry and you starve Christ. But you starve Christ if you starve Him of His doctrine. But the examination day will be an examination in practice. Have you passed your "practical." Not if you've scamped your theory. Doctrine comes first. Still the practice is the doctrine. You have learned of Christ to little purpose if you have not caught from Him the impulse of a sympathetic life. What is the rush of song which the poet puts into the soul of Paul?—

Oft, when the Word is on me to deliver,
Opens the heaven and the Lord is there,
Desert or throng, the city or the river,
Melt in a lucid Paridise of air.

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder
Bound, who should conquer, slaves, who should be kings,
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things.

Then, with a rush, the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call—
O to save these—to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!

It is the inspiration of the Word which kindles the flame of living brotherhood. So he who would love,

and show his love in life, must drink at the fountain of the Word. But that draught will teach him that the Word is not sound but life—that the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst men. We preach the doctrine of the Trinity, but you do not cheer us as they cheered the modern mouthpiece who said that his Christ of Hampstead Heath would not preach that, but only wind and water. There is a Christ of Hampstead Heath, and a Christ of Clapham Common, and of South Lambeth Road, and He is the same Christ Who preached upon the slopes of Olivet, and on the swards of Galilee, and in the boat upon the lake. And He preaches to Hampstead and Clapham and South Lambeth what He preached then. He preaches the doctrine of the Trinity, which is the doctrine of the universal and illimitable love. In proportion as we find and fathom and fondle this doctrine shall we do all we can for men. It will show us what we can do. The panorama of the great city will show to us the foulness and the sadness of the battle field, and, with it, the need for more hospitals, more schools, more green spaces, more pure water and fresh air. And we can build and furnish these; and we must do it. But the vanes of the temples which echo with the doctrine of the Trinity will remind us of the greater things we cannot do, save in the name and in the strength of Him whose doctrine we declare. They will show us a thirst which water cannot quench, a hunger which food can never satisfy, a squalor which rivers cannot cleanse, a pollution which chemistry can never purify. And, with the revelation they shall show a Cross, which is at once the hiding-place of

shame and the starting-point of succour—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy sins as cloud, Who maketh thy crimson as the snow. Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Yes, we can roll back the stone and unbind the shroud, and make ready the Passover. But it is only the Passover Himself who can say "Come forth!" and "Peace, be still!" to the dead or to the driven, and we bring more than water, health, and rest from shop-work, for we bring eternal life when we cry, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

VIII

MESSIAH'S REIGN

"And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—Isaiah xxxii., 2.

THERE is no question as to the allusion here. The whole chain of the context weaves itself around the predicted Messiah; the poetic genius of Isaiah adapts it beautifully to His Divine attributes, and to His gracious mission, while Christian experience attests the suitability of the language to Him and to Him alone Who is the Author and the Finisher of its faith.

We are led, therefore, by the text, as a description of the Redeemer's attributes and purpose, to consider the radical and substantial advantages of Messiah's reign. In proportion as its influence is felt, it will affect the spirit and policy of all human authority. Because the King reigns in righteousness, princes shall rule in judgment. There is something notably significant in the sudden change of the phrasing of the first and second verse. The first verse deals with kings and princes and with the attributes corresponding with their rank, viz., righteousness and judgment. Righteousness and judgment are what is expected

from a king, though the expectation is too often falsified. But the second verse speaks of guardianship, of providence, of protection. These are the functions of tenderness and love. There is nothing official about them. Hence the style and rank are dropped, and it is not said that a king or a prince shall be a hiding-place or a covert or a provider, but a "man" shall be a covert from the tempest and a shelter from the wind. You don't expect tenderness from kings, or love from rank. So the crown is taken off, and brotherhood and equality supersede the badge of state. The royalty of Christ ensures justice and righteousness; but the humanity and pity of Christ ensures protection, succour, shelter. It is by exposing Himself to the blast that He becomes our covert; not by wrapping robes of state about Him and remaining on a throne, but by stepping down and becoming in fashion as a MAN. "A king may reign in righteousness but a MAN shall be a covert and a hiding-place, a river in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Yet who shall say His royalty is not enhanced by His condescension? Does not the crown seem to flash the fairer by the stoop, and the nimbus to shine more brightly the barer the Divine Head becomes. We can, therefore, continue to speak of the reign of Messiah, even though the terms of royalty are merged in those of humanity; and rejoice the more in the rulership of a King because we contemplate the compassion of a Man. In the gracious functions which are attributed to the Man of whom our text is speaking we detect the most substantial of the advantages which must accrue from the rulership

of the King. What Christ is to us unofficially will enhance the value of His official relationship. The royalty of the King is ennobled by the grace of the Man, and the grace is enriched by the royalty. Monarchy and humanity blend, and in the blending righteousness and peace meet together, and mercy and truth embrace each other. There is little comfort to us to know that a King shall rule in righteousness; but there is every consolation in knowing that a Man shall be a hiding-place, a covert, and a rock in a weary land. The Kingship touches our desert; the humanity touches our need. We deserve righteousness; we need shelter and protection. The first seems fraught with threatening, the second with promise. The first is a rod barren and bare, to rule in equity; the second shows that rod to bud, like Aaron's, till it is flowered with grace. And yet the righteousness comes first. Christ must be King. It is the King who stoops, not the Man who rises. It must be accepted as the stoop of grace, and those who would come into the hiding-place must accept the conditions of the righteousness. As soon as the sceptre has been kissed by the lips of loyalty it seems to be laid aside; the crown drops from the brow of the King, and only the bending brow of the Man in all His sympathy is visible as He comes as a shelter and a hiding-place, the shadow of the great Rock in the weary land. Yet, as He bends, He shows the signs by which the righteousness is fulfilled. For there is yet the ring of a crown upon the bare brow of the Man. It is the mark of the crown of thorns. But He was none the less a King when He wore that crown. It was because He must reign in

righteousness that He wore it, and because it thus became Him to fulfil all righteousness that He blended the royalty and love together. So that, whether we look at the King or at the Man, we still contemplate the righteousness; and whether we regard the Man or the Monarch we still regard the love. He might have been righteous without being a hiding-place, but He could not have been a hiding-place without being righteous. But it is from our shelter in Him as our hiding-place that we can contemplate His royalty, and it is from this safe vantage that we can compute the substantial advantages of His reign.

And the first of these is the solution of difficulties which reason cannot supply. There are a hundred problems which mere human research must relegate in its despair to the limbo of the "unknowable" so long as the key is rejected which the sovereignty of Messiah supplies. It does not solve them as philosophic questions simply to say that the Lord is King, and, because He knows, we need not care to know. But it does solve them as impediments to hope and prospect if we practically accept the designation which the text affords, and come into the hiding-place which Christ's sympathy creates, and out of a living fellowship attain a living faith. Do you not suppose that John knew more as well as felt more when his head was on the bosom of his Lord than in colder moments of remove? Did He not see further, and drink deeplier with that heart-beat in his ear than when he doubted at a distance? The visions that he saw at Patmos gained their first inception there; the pigments by which the green of the tree of life and

the flush of the rosy bowers and the mellow tincture of the fruit were painted were mixed on the palette of that reverie; the gold of the fair streets and the jewels of the gates were dug out of that silent mine of love. On what other pillow than the bosom of the Lamb, while waiting by the altar of His sacrifice, could such a dream be dreamed as that which saw no temple, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were the Temple of the City? The veil of the Temple of the Old Jerusalem was rent in twain two or three days after John had been ambushed in that hiding-place; and he had seen beyond its screen a New Jerusalem in which the Temple itself had given way to a living Temple in whose sacred chancel, at whose love-altar he was meditating now. What does all this mean but the old lesson that it is love and not learning which solves mysteries? The loyal subject knows more of the Messiah's secrets than the plotting rebel, and the loving son knows more than the deserting alien. Live in Christ, and He in you, and He will give you the white stone with the gracious secret written in it, and, amidst the weariness of a weary land, you shall know enough in knowing whom you have believed.

And this reign of the Messiah creates a range of knowledge that no ingenuity could reach. We do not hesitate to say that true intelligence is co-extensive with the recognition of His name. He is the Light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world. Whether recognised or realised or no, it is He who pushes back the curtain of horizon from our human field, and widens the arc round which we would project

our gaze. In proportion as men see Christ do they see truth. And when the telescope lies by the Testament and the microscope beside the Word, discovery shall be of truer range. The key-notes struck by revelation have set the harp of life, of hope, of prospect, of anticipation all astir. What otherwise must be discord shall chime—thus touched—to harmony. And the music will be only perfect when intellect shall copy its scroll from the Divine score, upraise its song under the Divine baton, and join its hymn with that of the morning stars which sing together, and the sons of God who shout for joy.

And if the recognition of Messiah's reign supplies a key to wider ranges of discovery and knowledge, yet more directly does it touch the moral influence by promoting the attainment of moral ends which no virtue could command. If it baffles ingenuity in mind, it transcends virtue in morals. It lifts the moral ideal infinitely higher than any cold system of morality could raise it. The purest dream of virtue and of sweetness could never have adorned the throne with such garlands as Atonement has woven round it. There were teachers and philosophers of old whose schools were like a green and flowery oasis in a desert of decay. They gathered high-souled youth around them, and sent them forth to a voluptuous race, equipped with virtues which were the leaven of the age, and panoplied in principles which were the hope of history. The scholars of Socrates pervaded Athens with a light which was the glory of her forum and the consecration of her temples. The pupils of Plato showed the

white badge of purity which their master gave to them, the heritage of a royal line, and the legacy of Solon through a mother's right. But the perfume which the incense of these lives diffused amidst the reek of vice was but a musky breath, heavy and ephemeral, when contrasted with the Sharon rosebuds which blushed and purpled round the feet of Christ. The moralities of Socrates distilled at length into the hemlock bowl; the love of Jesus beads its libation on the lip of the wine-cup of eternal life. The dreams of Plato helped him to guess at immortality; the certainties of the Christian make him know in Whom he has believed. And, while seeing the invisible, the child of God is pressing towards a mark, and striving in a calling whose prize is higher, richer, nobler far than any virtue could command or theory cogitate. The reign of human morals shows a uniform half-washed in chemical dilutions; the empire of the King of Kings shall show an universal garment, once stained and foul, spotless as snow, because made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Messiah's Kingdom shall display a dominion over evils which no fortitude could secure. His stride to monarchy is a march over the forces of darkness and ignorance and sin. The reason that a Man can be a hiding-place from the wind is that a God has commanded that wind with an authority which is mightier than its force. He is a covert from the tempest because He is the Conqueror of the storm. He is a river of water in a dry place because His reservoir of resource is deeper than hell itself. He is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, because He has with-

stood the shock of all the tides of death, and scattered them to spray against the bosom of His patience, and painted them with rainbows in the colours of His love.

And thus His reign provides a solace amidst troubles that no foresight could avoid. When His reign is complete and absolute, no trouble will invade. Sorrow and sighing will flee away. There will be no more pain, no jealousy, no blight upon the leaves of love, no grudge upon the freedom of the soul, no night, no death, no darkness. And in proportion as that Kingdom spreads through these hearts of ours will these forces yield. Agony grows placid by the Healer's touch. The green eye purples into charity when discovering His glance. A pillar of fire leaps out of the murkiest night when He commands. And death drops his dart and bows obedience when He bids surrender. Man here is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. But He in Whom we shall be born again strides through the corridor of heaviest trial and wades in the waves of saltest woe; and at His forerunning footfall courage comes, and at His sigh of sympathy the heart grows brave. The widow's weeds begin to blush to flowers of hope when the tear of the Man of Sorrows falls upon them; the ribbon on the orphan's neck furls out its crape against a light which silvers it with promise, as Christ gathers the fatherless lambs upon His arm. And, looking through the grave into the daylight scattered by the wings of resurrection, sore hearts can greet their treasured love since death is swallowed up in victory.

The dominion of Christ brings privileges and relationships no calculation could justify. Tender

affinities of soul will find fruition, and what is wanting to the completeness of our lives below will be supplied out of the unselfish fulness of the love which is the imperial element of His Kingdom. And hence all that is now unsatisfactory and partial will be made ample and complete, since hopes shall be assured and prospects opened which leave no room for unsatisfied desire. We are complete in Him and in each other through Him. And not until we see Him face to face, feel Him heart to heart, and know Him soul in soul, will this perfectness of love and confidence accrue. When we sit at the same board, drink from the same cup, and joy in the same glory, then shall the oneness come which gives us full participation. We shall rejoice in the rulership which reigns in righteousness. Meanwhile, pending our uplifting, He has condescended. If we have not touched His Heaven, He has trod our earth. He has tasted the gall-cup of our sorrow, if we have not yet drunk the wine-cup of His joy. We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmity, but, having been tempted as we, is able to succour us when we are tempted. So, when you are tried, do not hie to a dead refuge, but seek a living shelter. Not in a cave or ambush shall you flee the storm. Not beneath sombre fans of Lebanon shall the wind be tempered to your strength. But a Man, a living Man, shall be a hiding-place from the wind; a mighty arm shall fling the shield about you which shall be your covert from the tempest; a leaping sympathy shall rill its river through your droughty weariness, and a loving patience shall be the rock to shelter you in the weary

land. He is a living refuge because He has been a dying sacrifice. Then let the heart of the rash begin to understand this knowledge, that the weary and the heavy laden have their only solace in a living Saviour. Let the tongue of the stammerers at least speak this truth plainly, that the Cross of the Redeemer is the sad world's refuge and the sinful world's asylum; and let the cowed, the careworn, and the crushed, the baffled, the blushing, and the bruised, the disappointed, the drooping, and the dead, the weeping, the weary, and the worn, casting all other confidence away, discern the Crown of God, as it rests upon the brow of the Man Christ Jesus, and accept the faithful saying that He came into the world to save sinners.

IX

THE EXALTATION OF THE GREAT MESSIAH

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church."—Eph. i., 22.

It would be difficult to discover the book or section of Scripture concerning which controversy, more or less learned—and generally more than less heated—has not raged. This Epistle to the Ephesians has not escaped the steam of the cauldron. No serious question or challenge has arisen—so far as we know—concerning its authorship, but dispute has accrued regarding the particular Church or community to which it was addressed. In patristic times it was an unsettled question. Marcion, a heretic of the second century, quoted by Tertullian at the commencement of the third, calls it "the Epistle to the Laodicæans." Those who are interested in such questions might advantageously consult Dr. Paley, Macknight, and thoughtful writers of their type. The evidence greatly preponderates in favour of its Ephesian designation. This city was the sphere of Pauline labour for three continuous years, during which his ministry was ex-

ceptionally successful. Nor can we forget his interview with the elders of this Church at Miletus, the solemn charge He gave them, and the affecting farewell that ensued.

The purpose of the Apostle in the particular verse before us is to arrest our minds by the lofty and inspiring theme of *The Exaltation of the Great Messiah.* In turning our reverent attention to this high topic we observe

I

that there lies on the very threshold of the theme the idea of a local heaven.

We frequently, and with reason, guard ourselves and warn one another against a too crude habit of localising the economy beyond the veil. We urge one another to regard it rather as a condition than a place, and we rather deprecate the politics of Heaven in our desire to make prominent its praises. This is well, as conserving the personal drift of a practical ministry, but we may, nevertheless, profitably endeavour to locate the sphere and area of that condition which Scripture commends to us as a "Kingdom," and in which it invites us to become "citizens." If we regard Heaven as a place, it seems to be a place which has three distinguishing attributes, viz., prescribed limits, native adaptation, and possible supercession or change. Scripture may be almost said to furnish us with a map of Heaven. Its imagery of rivers, mountains, cities, streets, and plains, gives to us a kind of glorified geography by which our conceptions are lifted to a locality, and we are taught to fall into the

procession of those who declared plainly that they sought "a country." Heaven is an inheritance as well as a condition, an allotment as well as an elevation. It has its objective as well as its subjective side. It is projected on a plan, and this plan has its limitations in the Divine economy. Going to Heaven means going somewhere, and this implies stepping across a frontier of delimitation sketched by Divine purity and wisdom.

And its adaptation applies not only to the citizen, but to the city. When it is said "there shall in no wise enter into it," etc., the purity of the place is indicated as a demand upon the purity of the dweller in its borders. Christ says He goes to prepare a place for us; and what Christ prepares must be adapted for those for whom He prepares it. He cleanses alike the city and the citizen, and, having washed the second in His blood, He carries him to a place which He has purified by His presence. And it is a place which is liable to supercession or change. It may "pass away"—giving way to a new Heaven and a new earth. There can be no monotony in the economy of God. Although He is "the same yesterday," etc., there will be ceaseless developments in the unfolding of His rule and resource. Eternity will be a kaleidoscope of novelty and yet a focus of stability. New spectacles, new songs, new literature ever evoking the exercise and the wonder both of heart and mind—but the unchanged Cross will be the colouring of all, and the unchanging Saviour the inspiration and the theme of each. An ever evolving history will bring its recurrent and culminating interest, and it will

be a history in which all are contemporary, because it will be an economy in which there is no death. There will be evolution without anarchy, progress without collision, growth without suffering, and fruition without friction. The citizens will not agitate for redress, but simply grow towards enlargement. They will not struggle out of bondage into freedom, or writhe out of anomaly to justice, but go from strength to strength and from grace to grace. Strong always, they will grow stronger according to their absorption in their King; graceful always, they will grow more graceful and more gracious in the ratio of their assimilation and their love. So that Heaven may be the scene of a perpetual change, and there may be a continual supercession of the old heaven—in a Divine renewal —as the inhabitants in their unceasing growth demand the stronger atmosphere of a stronger life.

II

Through these features of the local heaven we are aided in tracing the path that conducted the Messiah to His throne. It is a path on which the councils of eternity shed their steady beams. Those councils foresaw and acknowledged the limits, the adaptation, and the changes of which we have spoken. The scheme which contemplated the goal defined the path which led to it. The goal was a realm of universal love and joy, and the access to that goal must be through kindred sceneries and lights. But, while love embroiders the pathway, it is not so easy to trace the joy. Still, it was love and joy which paved the path of Jesus to His throne. The love inspired His dive

into the gloom, but the joy that was set before Him was the backbone of the endurance of the cross and the contempt which trampled on the shame. He saw the goal before Him all along, and in those councils in whose light this pathway was mapped out that goal was the conspicuous feature at which the ambition of His love caught fire. He scarcely saw the cross for the crown it was to win: hardly reckoned the price for the guerdon it should buy. And it is here that there comes in that element in Divine economy which the present-day theology is so eager to ignore, the vicarious element of the Messiah's work. Whenever we let our thoughts or imaginations turn to the picture of that Divine Parliament out of whose deliberations the redemption of our race arose, we cannot repress or evade this vicarious element. "For us men and our salvation" was that gracious Cabinet encloistered. There was no other reason for it. It was love which summonsed it. And yet it had all the motive force of a political ambition. Man's redemption and God's glory always go together, and —if we may say it with reverence—man's overthrow and Divine discredit must also go together. This intertwining of human redemption with Divine glory is the great charter of our hope and the guarantee of our ultimate oneness with God. Deity seemed to feel the prize of its ideal slipping from its grasp. Satan was slavering with the slime of the Satyr the features of the Hyperion God had moulded for His image, and the purpose of His creative work and love was being overthrown. He had declared it "very good," and behold it was not very good, but very evil, and

the double question before the Divine Council is—"Shall man be lost? Shall God be defeated?" The "No!" which thundered through the eternal temple involved the Advent and the Incarnation of the Son of Man, and in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son—made of a woman—made under the law, etc. And yet He came. He was not sent against His will. He leaped forth with the combined alertness of ambition and of love, the ambition which could cast out the devil, the love which could restore the angel. We are tracing Christ's pathway to His throne, and it must be a pathway over His fallen enemies. He could not reach His throne without dethroning the usurper. And this He did by pursuing a course of unsullied purity and light. He taught men how to live. But to say that He was a mere Reformer, who wrote the mottoes of meekness and of self-control somewhat more clearly than others, is to misconceive the essence of the Ambassador and to dwarf the scope and purpose of His embassy. He carried the light and the purity He shed because they were His nature, because He was Divine, because He was from the beginning, because He came from the bosom of the Father, because the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

But it was a pathway of sorrow and death. And why? Where was the needs-be for anything of the kind, except inasmuch as His mission was an expiatory work? The most orthodox of our temple lyrics are the most despised, but they are the most true; and when you sing—

> He came to atone
> For sins not His own,

you may sing out of tune with academic society, but you sing in unison with heavenly choirs, and this was a pathway of sacred triumph and renown. It would not and could not have been this had it not been a pathway of expiation. The Cross was the one and only passport to the Crown, and it is only by the marshalling in His train of a race once fallen, but by Him restored, that Christ's full empire and renown can be achieved. Nor can His fulness be worthy of Himself till it is shown as the fulness which filleth all in all.

III

Turning to the high and hallowed functions which the ascended Messiah assumes, it is clear to the spiritual perceptions that He terminated for ever all earthly priesthood. Yet priestcraft plies its trade, and bolsters its trade union, and flaunts its livery. But we were at least wary enough to guard our statement by an adjective which saves it from rashness. We said "spiritual perceptions." An earthly and a human priesthood is the offspring and the spawn of perceptions the most carnal, the most mercenary, the most corrupt. It is the progeny of a low, hot, and tyrannous ambition, of a fawning, crawling, cruel hypocrisy, of a traffic and simony in human darkness and superstition. While there are gulls to believe there will be tricksters to impose. While there are cowards to quail there will be bullies to intimidate. While there are customers to purchase there will be priests to sell. The whole system of a human priesthood is a traffic in the people's fears. It has slowly and subtly inter-

twined itself with their most craven superstitions, and built an edifice whose every feature is a vulgar appeal to their poorest and most sordid calculations. If the ivy of personal piety and noble character has gathered about any buttress of this giant fabric, it is on the same principle that verdure sometimes flourishes on rottenness, and beauty clings around decay. That priestcraft has marched through the centuries alongside of intelligence is one of the most staggering marvels of the universe. That it has ever thriven where the Bible is known baffles all fathoming. To credit revelation and to respect a priest is a spiritual impossibility, even though we take it as a social fact. When Jesus swept the Temple floors with the simple homespun of His peasant robe, He purged it from the last shade of earthly dominance and of sacerdotal claim, and packed the priest with all the other hucksters who had turned it into a den of thieves. When He proclaimed Himself the Light of the World He drank the torchlight of ceremonial into His own effulgence. And when He was lifted up from the earth, He reared an altar holier and higher than the incensed mummeries of men. The so-called penitent who can grovel to a priest while he is free to sue before Christ crucified is blind. For, when the Saviour terminated earthly priesthoods by His "Come unto Me," He inaugurated the special dispensation of the Holy Spirit in His legacy of peace to man. And every child of God who will accept that legacy shall perceive that He assumed the seat of intercession. It is that seat He occupies to-day. It is as its Occupant that He invites our prayers and quaffs our homage. All

that intercepts this vision of the Interceding Christ stultifies and stunts our worship, and chokes the music from our songs of praise. The most faltering hallelujah from the simple, the feeblest hosanna from the little child, is more in tune with the litanies of angels than all the purchased masses and the hired intonations that cathedral arches have re-echoed since Art was deified in worship. They say we can't compete with Rome in music. Perhaps not. But we can compete with her in praise. Once catch the vision of the Saviour on the seat of intercession, once see the one High Priest with the red stigmata on His lifted hands, and your "Worthy the Lamb" will float past all the oratorios of orchestras, and, though priests and impressarios may stop their ears, the harp of Gabriel will find your hymn in tune, and the heart of Jesus Christ will own the tribute of the song. For by His climb to royalty the Galilean has become the sole Head of the universal Church. It is King and Priest: it is State and Church in one. And He is Head over all things to His Church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

IV

In addition to these hallowed functions, it becomes us to notice the subsidiary powers that are committed to His hands. He becomes the depository of the complex interests of time. In proportion as these are confided to Him by the free volition of men do they become hallowed, sublimated, and purified. The halting aspirations and the selfish policies of human state, the sordid interests of communities and of in-

dividuals, and the devious ideals and pursuits of earth indicate, assuredly, a wide deflection from His beneficent and sacred influence. Yet still He shall become the ultimate resolvent of the problems and the skeins of earthly and of temporal complexity, and it will be His fingers that will unravel all when the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain.

His, too, are the mysterious issues from life and from death. These are interdependent, and in proportion as they centre in Him will they resolve themselves into a fulness of life in which death will be abolished and destroyed.

All supernatural energies and agents are brought under His control. His power sets bounds to all unholy forces, and His name and presence are the charm at which all spectres are restrained and laid. As He cast out devils once He can cast them out now. As He hushed tempests aforetime He can still them yet to-day. Whatever may be the frigid and the stony courtesy which His name evokes from modern pedantry, the spirits of evil do Him the homage of calling Him the Son of God. And though human stupidity may be callous at His call, infernal intelligence still trembles at His glance.

For to Him is the mastery of universal worlds, and His empire will never be complete till all creatures shall wail because of Him, and He shall have put all things under His feet.

V

His wondrous and Divine career is a crowning tribute to our special race. It was a tribute to the

nature and the dignity of man. Faulty and fallen, yet hopeful and redeemable, He thus contemplated the great human family and faced the problem of the re-branding of His image on the sullied clay. His appeal was ever to a slumbering and perverted faith. He strove to call the soul back into that path of light which the shadow of death had suddenly eclipsed. And hence His passage through that grave against whose further side the enemy had sought to fix the stone. He bore a key in His right hand that man might regain his rifled crown. And through the gloom of death and of the grave He shot the shafts of immortality and light.

For He pitied man as one who had been malignantly betrayed. His work was a tribute to the moral possibilities of our nature. He saw the meshes of the snare that had been spread for the hurting of man's soul, and He came to his help as fain to deliver him from the snare of the fowler. He saw the coils of the serpent folded round his better manhood, crippling his obedience with the slimy lie of independence, and He set Himself to break the treacherous fetter by the bruising of that serpent's head. It is said of reptiles that they carry a jewel in their heads—but this was a prize too rich to be "snaked" away from Him who shaped its facets to gather and reflect the radiance of His own eternal life. The rape of the jewel of man's soul by Satan was a theft too audacious and a greed too gluttonous to pass. I wonder whether the green and baleful flicker of a serpent's eye, as he crawls and writhes in the proneness of his empoisoned curse, is meant to reflect the sinister and baffled light

of a crushed ambition. "Thou shalt not surely die!" was the hiss of his first prototype. "Thou shalt not surely die!" was the echo from the purpose of the woman's seed. And thus, like a mightier Laocoon, the Deliverer untwines the nervous sinews from his prey, and sets the choked lung free to quaff again the inspirations of requickened life.

And this deliverance is a tribute to the illustrious part which man is destined to fill in the final economy of things. If Christ passed by the nature of angels, it was to lift His creature into a higher grade than they. Deep as his fall, and burning as his shame, man is still cast for a *rôle* in the great drama of events which is alike heroic and sublime. The head which has bowed so low is reserved to wear a crown, and the love of Christ was bent upon the purchase of this crown. And it will be the constant food and satisfaction of that love to contemplate His ransomed children in the dignity of their celestial attire. Whatever pangs of retrospect the deathless memory of the Cross will bring to His redeemed, it will be His joy to see those pangs assuaged in the fulness of His perfected redemption. If the thought of the throe from which man's life was born shall ever make him sad, it will pass away in the exuberance of the abundant life which makes his immortality. The pathos of the "was slain" will swell into the acclaim of the "ever liveth," and the hint of the Old Jerusalem will make a helpful setting to bring out the immortal contrast of the New.

VI

And thus we find ourselves led on to stand upon the threshold of the issues that await the triumph of the Saviour's cause. And these we find in the final overthrow of aggressive evil. The tide that has overset so many a Canute-chair will curb its insolence at the mandate of an enthroned Christ. And every fraud by which honour has been mocked, every stain by which whiteness has been sullied, every lie by which truth is shamed, every cruelty by which patience has been tried, will reel to its oblivion, and Justice and Mercy, Purity and Love will come forth like a band of slighted sisters to receive their vindication.

The triumph of the Saviour's cause will find its issue in the boundless augmentation of motive power. The momentum of purpose will be quickened. Wings of willinghood will supersede the clumsy feet of lumbering reluctance. The alacrities of a buoyant service will displace the frigid forms of paltry programmes. The drawled and meagre liturgies of lurid lip-service will flame into the unbought aspirations of angelic song. The thirsty egoism which touts for prominence and applause will fling its crown at more deserving feet. The "for Christ's sake," on which we build our prayers for favour, will be a deeper basis for the praises that we give. Motive will be stronger because more worthy and unmixed, and because the fulness of the life inflating it from within and evoking it from without, impelling it in retrospect and suffusing it in prospect, rarifying its atmosphere and engoldening its view, will lift it to the unselfish

altitudes of consecrated worship. These issues of Christ's triumphs will culminate in a permanent and eternal economy. All flux and fashion which give such shifty and unreal complexions to sublunary things will pass away, and the flickering and dissolving shows of time will consolidate into a perfected and imperial regime, which has its principle and basis in the Cross. The life of Heaven is sacrifice. It is the hope of earth. It is the death of hell. The roots of the Cross sink down there, and they shall no sooner reach those depths than they shall rake out the last ember of infernal fire. And then—not till then—will the chorus be complete, the praise perfect, and the hallelujah be unanimous. But with that achievement the Saviour shall be eternally ensconsed upon His throne, having fulfilled the splendid insolence of His majestic boast —"O Death, I will be thy plagues! O Hell, I will be thy destruction!"

Strange, if we have no answer to return to Him who calls us to follow and attend Him upon this pathway to coronation and renown! We have an answer. But what is it? The yawn of procrastination. The farm, the merchandise, the hectic nuptial, the more convenient season. We get more and more to regard pulpit appeals either as things of course, to be endured and forgotten as impracticable or old-fashioned, and to be cast aside as out of date. But the old appeal abides, and to critics and colleges, as well as to other criminals and outcasts, the same Saviour calls in the same accents of appeal. He calls us all to come out of self, to break the poor parochial slavery of pride, and come into the perfect liberty of simple

faith. We often find a fragment of censorious raillery from which to weave and manufacture what we call a "sermon" by girding at the first disciples for their vanity and weakness in asking which should be the greatest. And yet it is a source of sacerdotal self-importance to adopt their pedigree and call ourselves their successors. We should certainly find it easier to trace the successorship in the weakness than the strength. We pity Peter with a cheap commiseration for his faithless denial and his heady oaths. And yet it is the proudest boast of swaggering Popes to claim fraternity with him. Could they but really borrow the keys which hang upon his girdle, perhaps they would find an instrument to unlock their penitence. We speak of Peter as the rock. Let the rock be touched with the faith-wand at whose contact Moses filled the land with streams, and with the gush of Peter's tears would come the rainbows amidst which the love of Jesus fills the soul with godly sorrow. Would you follow the Master as He strides to coronation? Then look at the hand with which He beckons you. It clasps no parchments of promotion. It offers no diplomas of proficiency. It waves it gesture to no Latin oracle. The classic of its call is simply, "Take My yoke upon you." And the palm which gives it emphasis is red with sear of nail. And the only answer to the vision which the poorest Thomas from the dusty Galilee or the proudest Pilate from the haughtiest Rome need give to its appeal is the "My Lord and my God!" which crucifies its faithlessness with the self-same nail, and fastens its trust to the same eternal Cross.

X

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more."—Rev. xxi., 1.

I

THIS is what committees and movement mongers call "Citizen Sunday." I have been presiding lately at the Health Committee, and talking about vaccination and lymph and sanitation and food-stuffs, and a good deal of other stuff. Let us adjourn the Health Committee to the sanctuary, and try to sweeten the bill of health. Where do you live? is a common question. It is asked sometimes in idle curiosity, but oftener, we trust, by intended sympathy. It is the enquiry put to the helpless waif when found by those who would protect him. You can't do much for a man till you have found out where he lives. And sometimes the best thing you can do for him when you know his abode is to get him out of it without delay. The words we have quoted for a text turn our thoughts to our present dwelling-place, and, while illustrating

many features of attraction, still seem to hint of notice to quit, and hold over our heads a writ of speedy ejectment. There is much that is more than attractive—that is charming—in this world which is man's dwelling-place. It has its Divine origin indelibly written upon it. Despite the thousand shadows that its human tenant casts upon it, the echoes of the mandate, " Let there be light! " are grandly audible, and the obedience of the orbs to the command is gloriously perceptible. Its surface shows the hand of God at every turn; the green grass, the flowers, the hills, the forests, the leaping torrents and the silent lake, the sea, the snow, the mountain—all tell God's work; and, as Coleridge says,

Earth with her thousand voices praises God.

Its associations blend with the scenery to testify its origin and acknowledge its Creator; and the natural religion—barbaric though it be—which sin and aberration cannot drive out of the human heart, not only display a Parent's hand upon His children, but the hand even of the rebel clutching at the Father's robe as if loth to let Him go.

This world is no new tenement, but carries with it the traces of indefinite antiquity. Science has altered our chronology and corrected our arithmetic by unveiling frescoes on the slate of history behind and beneath the furthest layer of the palimpsest of calculated dates. The keynote, " in the beginning," which struck upon our fathers' ears as a voice of yesterday, comes rolling from a genesis of a million years. And the earth is constantly revealing some fresh trophy of antiquity written on the tablets of the

past, which volcanic throes are casting at our feet. Yet the old earth, so hoary in its data, still coaxingly invites and generously rewards the hand of culture. Like an old beau or veteran dandy, it takes a pride in being pruned and trimmed, and pays the toiler by smiling with fresh grace and looking younger than before. It seems to declare its affinity with its Divine Creator, by showing that a thousand years are as a day and one day as a thousand years.

II

Yet it shows indications of change and decay. We gather signs of these in its hereditary convulsions. If you and I were Neapolitans instead of Londoners, and lived within the rumblings of Vesuvius instead of the sounds of Bow Bells, we should have a closer object-lesson of what we mean. But our own island, small as it is, shows signs of natural unrest which are quite clear enough to attest the ravages of change. On one coast we find corn waving upon fields which formerly were lifting ships upon their bosom, and on another we find fleets rocking upon acres which were farmsteads a few centuries back. Out of these hereditary convulsions there arise mysterious transformations which change the local topography of districts and the general geography of continents. The traveller across some plain or desert will suddenly come upon a mammoth boulder which no human force could possibly have borne so far inland, and learned men will tell him that it has been left by the receding tides of some great sea which once spread over the space where men have built their villages or nature

has developed forests. And the strongest emphasis of all is laid upon the marks of change by the manifold social corruptions which contaminate the human race. The decay which comes upon man's dwelling-place falls like a blight on man himself, despite the strides of progress, and the climb of refinement, and the march of education. Corruption springs out of these very signs themselves. Effeminacy accompanies ease, and weakness is evolved from culture. In the sweat of his brow man eats his bread, and the plenitude of his food cannot repair the waste of his toil. He adorns his abode only to fatigue himself, and the garden that he tills becomes but a graveyard for his bones. Hardiness succumbs, and backbone weakens as progress moves, because social corruption creeps in with the very luxuries of discovery. Craving outruns accretion, and the gold which men amass becomes the capital of a traffic in the trades of vice. So that while with one hand man seems busy with a trowel to build up his habitation, with the other he is shaking its fabric down. Like a blind Samson, he feels the pillars on which the house standeth, only to bring it crashing on his rivals' heads and on his own. And Christian aspiration, as it stands amongst the ruins, needs the help of the oft-quoted hymn—

> Change and decay in all around I see:
> O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

III

And the evidence of a Divine answer to such prayer comes in the elements of consecration that still pervade our human dwelling-place. Although mental

culture will caricature itself by the crudeness of its advance and the blights it gathers, it flourishes like a hardy tree amidst frosts and droughts, and flings an ineffaceable beauty on the picture. This is because there is a Hand unseen, and often, too, unrecognised, which guides carefully and paternally alike the pilgrim who is dazzled by his own light and the plodder who gropes in his own ignorance. To both is brought the steady torch of revelation, which reserves its illumination for the eye of faith. The streaming light of revelation is given as an aid to the bewildering twilight of discovery. God's Word is the conserving salt which arrests corruption and purifies the atmosphere of life. And the perfume of the Christian sacrifice comes to enrich the air and give its afflatus to the life and its wing to the drooping hope of man. He is constrained to answer this pervading influence by kindling the incense of a pure devotion. He hallows his dwelling-place by setting up an altar on its hearth. As soon as prayer rises in a house the foundations of that house grow strong. Although man has sorely desecrated the temple of his residence, the High Priest has not deserted it. Though the tables of the money-changers encroach upon the altars of the suppliants, and the seats of the sellers of doves outnumber the niches of confessional, the Teacher still lingers by the lectern, and the Prophet yet utters His appeal. The whip of small cord has not cleared the sanctuary; but while Mammon is busy re-setting the tables that Christ has overthrown, there are still Elijahs to rebuild the altars which neglect has crumbled. And godliness shall outstrip even greed one day, and it

shall be seen that zeal is forging to the front, and that the unbent knees of hidden conscripts are advancing, and those of Ahab's host are trembling. In proportion as the perfume of Christ's sacrifice pervades the world will the incense of an answering prayer be perceptible from the altars of men's hearts and homes. And when the Cross is seen, and prayer takes inspiration from the vision, its breath shall sweep across the entire dwelling-place of man, and blow away the dust which has silted into the footprints of Jesus of Nazareth, and show the consecrating and quickening pathway of the Resurrection and the Life amongst the clods and graves of the great cemetery of earth, till a new earth shall answer the sun-smile of a new Heaven where death is swallowed up in victory.

IV

This is a hope which prepares us for the Divine transformation that awaits it. "There shall be no more sea." You say the sea is beautiful. Aye, but it is cruel. The beauty of the sea is the beauty of ruin. Its noblest purposes are suggestions of our fall. Though the sea is the grandest object in sublunary nature it is a living satire on the corruption of man. What is the teaching of the tide? What is the syntax of the sea? What are the wild waves saying? The sea is the well-spring of life. It holds the salt of conservation and health. It is the antidote to corruption. It flings the spray of bland revival over all the world. It is the beneficent chemist of the elements. It is the St. George to slay the dragon of blight and blasting. While deserts and swamps and morasses of

miasma are proclaiming and dispreading death around, the sea rises like a healthy rebel and booms a brave defiance—"Thou shalt not surely die." And its waves are dashed against the bulwarks of destruction like the legions of a host. The sea is the parent of the clouds. And though these children hide the dome and lights of heaven, they fling its blessings down upon the fields and make them green and fruitful. For if clouds are the offspring of the sea, harvests and vintages are the ruddy children of the clouds. If Neptune is not a reaper, he makes the sickle with which the reaper gathers in the food of man. He is the grandfather if not the father of the harvest-home. And he is the pacificator of the nations. The more he rages the less they rage. He keeps enemies apart. And while armies are rushing to the coasts, he gives them pause to think and to revise their policy, as his billows thunder, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." But all these uses are a satire on man, and an exposure of his folly. Had man not been foolish, he would have needed no chemistry of marine to keep him alive. His oxygen and ozone and every tonic element would have been the direct breath of God. His little dose of energy would not have been bruised by the pestle of Providence in the mortar of the main, but given in a draught of immortality by the Apothecary of an endless life. The refreshment of his Eden would have risen in dewdrops from the jewellery of the King of Heaven, not fallen in chilling rain from the vapours of the rebel earth. And the nations would have yearned in brotherhood with the ardours of gregarious Pentecost—not quarrelled over their

geography, and reddened their frontier-lines with blood. So that the sea only makes apparent the deficiencies of man's dwelling-place by its function of repair and conservation. Salt is good; but only because it is an antidote to corruption. A physician is good; but only because he battles with disease. The juice of the grape is good; but only because it revives the fainter by the way. So in the new earth over which the new Heaven shall fling its arch, there shall be no more sea because there shall be no more sin. There is a dark side to the sea as well as a majestic. The chemist can poison as well as cure, and thousands have lost brave lives upon the sea and left broken hearts upon the shore. It is the parent of other clouds than those that fertilise the earth—the clouds that darken mothers' lives, and leave lovers' hopes benighted. It flings wrecks upon our coasts and splashes brine upon our hearts. It woos blithe enterprise to trust its calms, only to baulk its confidence by the treachery of its rage. It rends relatives apart and leaps in glee at the width of their divorcement. But there shall be no more sea, no objects of dismay, no treacherous calms, no boisterous passions, no sepulchral depths, no gulfs of separation when the final home is reached.

V

Where, then, is this pathway that leads us to this final home. It lies hard by the foot of the Cross. It is not till the pilgrim passes this that the burden falls, and not until the burden falls that he can climb the vantage whence the prospect is disclosed. The Cross

of Christ is the only lever which can lift the leaden horizon. While men are contented to confine their commerce to a stone confession that the earth is the Lord's, while they fume to appropriate its fulness to themselves, the Royal Exchange will exhaust the royalty of their barter and their traffic. The golden grasshopper which answers to the wind is a truer emblem of the temper of the time. A surer breath must move the vane when the air of the new Heaven shall greet the marts and temples of the new earth. The Cross is set up in the Alpine valleys, and the pilgrim sometimes kneels before it. But he is far from the fever of his city strife at such a time, and the memory gives pause to Mammon. The imp of pilfering sneaks off from the genius of the Cross. Vandals were wont to chip the mossy stone, and carry lichened relics from the crumbled alcoves of the Roman Coliseum, till a reverent Pope bethought him of the expedient of setting up a cross in the centre of the storied area. And the silliest and most careless boor can hardly violate the sanctity when once he has jogged his shallow memory by a glance at that emblem of forbearance. Could we but set up a Calvary on the trampled flagstones of our markets instead of huddling it in the mosses of the mountains or the granite of the gorge, there were some hope that selfishness might bow to sacrifice. But while learning itself is so wedded to the old earth, and so indifferent to Heaven, old or new, as to rule the name of Jesus from the scroll, and hang on to a Christless ball as a plaything for the game of criticism, how can we expect the hucksters and the sharks to sweat beneath any higher

motto than "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Until the Cross is seen in other setting than a chancel or basilica, and is scored in blood upon the heart instead of hung in gold around the neck, the old earth will be too cold for Christ. It must be visible in our shops, our schools, our playgrounds, and our homes. It must stretch its beams across the entire week, not make a show upon the Sunday and then disappear. It will be a new earth when the Cross is everywhere and always dominant, for then the pathway to its evolution will lie along the line of regenerating grace. We know, too, that this pathway leads us through the gate of death and its intervening realm of pain, and carē, and strife, and struggling. But it transmutes all these when the Cross is set beside them. The gate of death becomes engoldened because of the life behind its bars, just as the seal of Cæsar melted because a heart the grave could not restrain was beating in its shades. Death flies before the Cross, and in its light is swallowed up in victory. And all those intervening incidents which are the acolytes of death and caterers for its carnival vanish in its beam. For there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying, and grief and sighing shall flee away. And the ordeal of the last assize besets this pathway, but is disarmed of its terrors by the Cross. What wizardry is this which environs this ensign, and which enchants no other. The Cross is omnipotent because it is the object-lesson of unselfishness. When self is conquered Satan is disarmed, and the only altar for this altruistic immolation is the Cross.

It is God Whose power created the old earth, and

Whose glory illumined the old heaven, and it is to God that the supernal novelty of the transmuted Heaven and earth are due. It is only He Who can say, "Behold! I make all things new"—only He Who once spake and it was done, and commanded and it stood fast, Who can speak again with the same authority, and repeat the same peremptory decree. But His grace invites His creature into co-operation with His recreative work. He permits us to become workers together with Himself. And He calls us to fall into line with the policy of His eternal counsels in the evolution of a new world. You and I become creators and redeemers in proportion as we put off self and put on Christ. Would you be a creator? Then say, "Let there be light!" and there shall be light as soon as you take the shadow of self from the Light of the World. Would you be a redeemer? Then take up your cross, glorifying in its offence and shame, declaring—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live. Crucified with the old earth which signed His martyrdom, and the old Heaven which would not look on it. Living in the new earth which draws its light from the new Heaven, which exults in His coronation and brings its trophies to His crown."

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